

SEPTEMBER 2006



PAGE 70

**HOW
HITLER
COULD HAVE
WON**



PAGE 86

**MONTY
Fair and
Balanced**



PAGE 30

**Sherman's
Leadership
LESSONS**

PAGE 39

**4 INTERACTIVE
COMBAT
MISSIONS**

ARMCHAIR

GENERAL

PAGE 78

**HOW
THEY WON**



**RALPH
PETERS:
NIGERIAN
NIGHTMARE**

**8 NEW
ACTION
PACKED
GAMES**

**STORMIN'
NORMAN'S
DESERT
VICTORY**

**BEST WAR
DOCUMENTARY
DVDs**

**THE
BEGINNING
OF THE END
ROMMEL
AT EL ALAMEIN**



STRATEGY >>

TACTICS >>

INSIGHTS >>

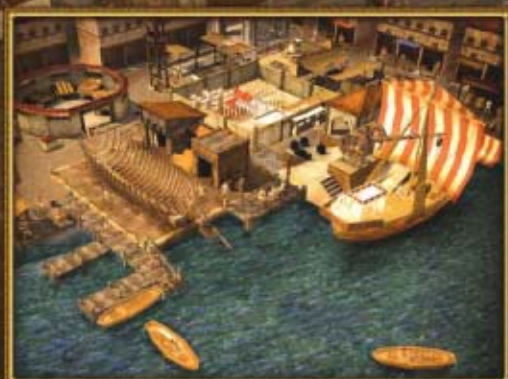
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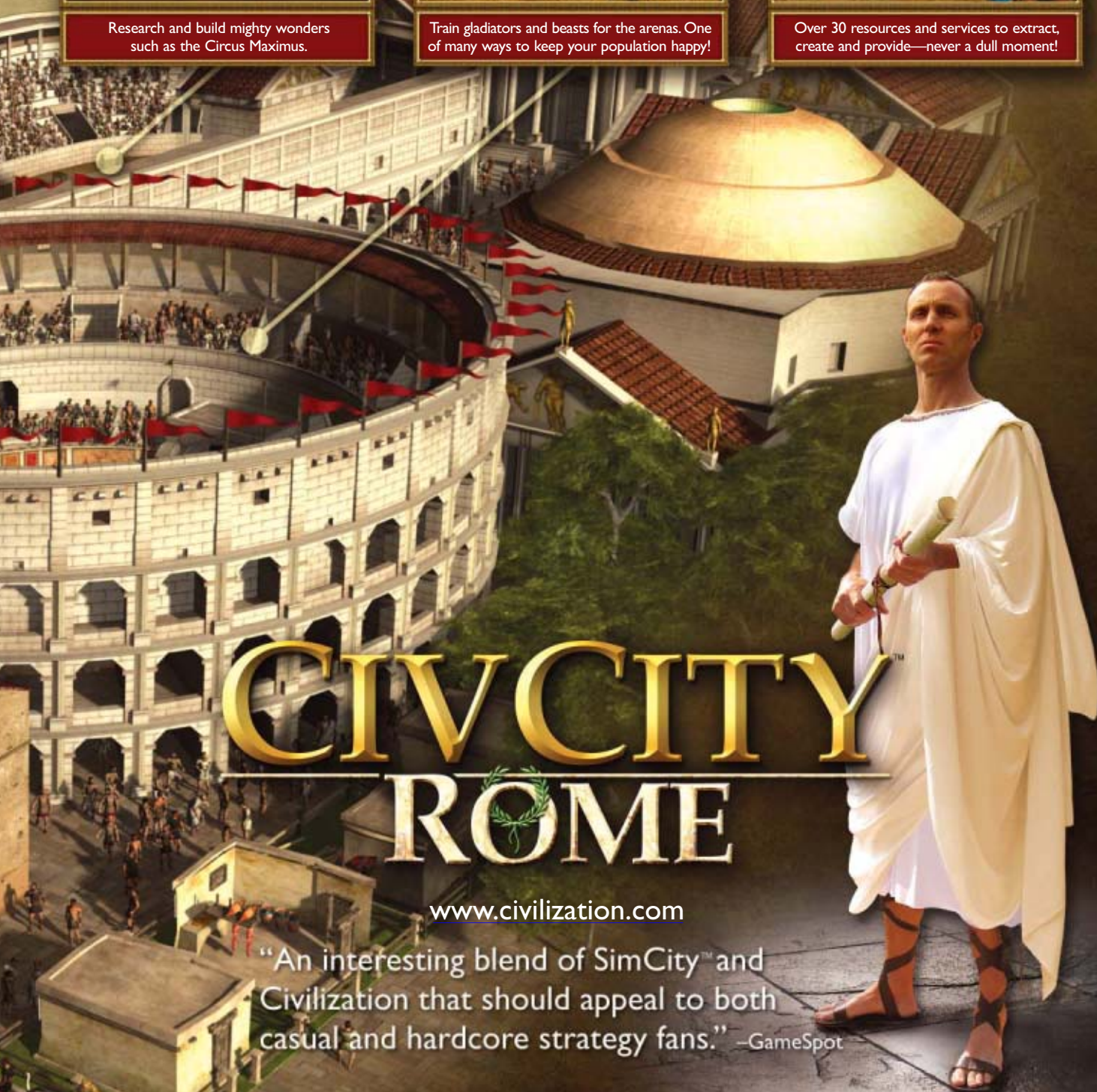
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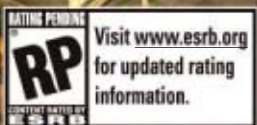
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July 28, 1943. British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery visits U.S. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. in Sicily. Monty's egotistical manner strained relations with his American counterparts.

CONTENTS

VOLUME III ISSUE 4

p. 86



SPECIAL FEATURES

70 How Hitler Could Have Won World War II

A revealing look at how the Nazi dictator could have written a chilling alternate ending to history's most destructive war.

By Bevin Alexander

78 Churchill, FDR and Stalin

Acclaimed historians examine how the Allied heads of state led their nations to victory.

By Carlo D'Este, Brian M. Sobel and Jerry D. Morelock

FEATURES

ICS (INTERACTIVE COMBAT STORY)

54 At the Sharp End: Part I Bloody Peleliu

New Pacific War series! Join Lance Corporal James Devin and his fellow Marines as they battle fanatical Japanese defenders in desperate island combat. YOU control the outcome!

By John Antal

WHAT NEXT GENERAL?

62 Rommel at El Alamein

The Desert Fox met his match at this turning-point World War II battle. Can YOU win his toughest fight?

By Richard Armstrong

BATTLEFIELD LEADER

86 Monty

Montgomery's behind-the-scenes "battles" with his American Allies rivaled those he fought against the Nazi enemy.

By Brian M. Sobel



ON THE COVER
Field Marshal Rommel

PHOTO BY HANS GERT FREIHERR VON ESEBECK, ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY VERLAG DIE HEIM-BUECHEREI — BERLIN 1943

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August / September 06

Germany's "Desert Fox" pushed British forces back to the Egyptian border in 1942. At El Alamein, however, he came up against Gen. Bernard Montgomery.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 PUBLISHER'S NOTE**
- 6 EDITOR'S LETTER**
- 8 MAILBAG**
- RALPH PETERS' CRISIS WATCH**
- 10 Nigerian Nightmare**
- 10 QUESTIONS**
- 12 Colonel Kevin Benson**
- 14 DISPATCHES**
Reports from the front, significant events, cool gear and more!
- COMMANDER DOSSIER**
- 24 General H. Norman Schwarzkopf**
- WEAPON FILES**
- 26 M-1 Abrams Tank**
- COMMAND DECISIONS**
- 28 Ike's Bulge Dilemma**
Eisenhower's tough choice between America's Bradley and Britain's Montgomery.
- LEADERSHIP**
- 30 General William Tecumseh Sherman on Leadership**
- HOW THEY FOUGHT**
- 32 History's Most Disastrous Retreat**
Napoleon's failed Russian Campaign, winter, 1812.
- TIPPING POINTS**
- 36 The Terrible Trinity of World War I**
How war was changed forever.
- COMBAT!**
- 39 Tiger Trap! 1945**
Choose the correct course of action as a German Tiger tank takes on 10 Soviet T-34s.
- YOU COMMAND**
- 44 Hastings, 1066**
Test your combat decision-making skills in the battle that decided England's fate.

ACG INTERACTIVE

p.39

Take command in *Armchair General's* interactive battles where YOU make the decisions!

COMBAT!
YOU COMMAND
YOU COMMAND SOLUTION
INTERACTIVE COMBAT STORY
WHAT NEXT GENERAL?

- YOU COMMAND SOLUTION**
- 50 Chinese Farm, 1973**
Historical outcome and winning Reader Solutions to CDG #14.
- WITNESS TO WAR**
- 94 "Waco" Combat Gliders**
A firsthand account of an operation that was often more dangerous than combat.
- GAME BUZZ**
- 96 War Never Looked So Good**
Eight dazzlers for your gaming pleasure.
- VIDEO GAME REVIEW**
- 98 Strategy, Technology and Gunplay ... Oh My!**
A trinity of new and absorbing war and strategy games.
- WARGAME REVIEW**
- 100 Crown of Glory and Take Command: Second Manassas**
Exciting Napoleonic and Civil War action games!
- DVD LIBRARY**
- 102 "Reel" War**
Top 5 must-have war documentaries.
- BOOKSHELF**
- 104 The Rommel Myth Shattered**
A new book takes aim at the mythology surrounding Hitler's best general.
- 108 PARTING SHOT**

p.62



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Thank YOU, Lt. Caliguire

Starting a new magazine is no small task. It is very costly in terms of money, time and worry. This is especially true for a small, independent publisher like *Armchair General* operating in an industry dominated by very large corporations. Most of the magazines on the newsstands today are published by huge corporations that deal with massive magazine distributors, which in turn deal with huge retailers. These magazines sell advertising to big agencies that represent even bigger advertisers. And the plants where the magazines get printed are typically the size of several football fields.

I am generalizing, of course, but you get the picture. This is an industry of giants and it can be dangerous to be the small guy navigating his way through. In fact, about two years ago the president of Dennis Publications, the publishers of *Maxim* magazine, was quoted as saying, "Our attitude is 'best of luck to anybody who's brave enough to take on the challenge of launching a new magazine in this day and age.'"

So am I brave or am I crazy to have launched *Armchair General*? Well, I don't really know the answer to that. But I can tell you that on those tougher days

when I find myself wondering if maybe I am just crazy, along comes a letter from one of you that instantly reminds me of why I do this — Passion. Passion for history, Passion to make it engaging and interesting, and most of all, Passion to respect the men and women of our military. Your letters reconnect me to my Passion ... they reenergize me. For all of you who take the time to write, don't ever underestimate the incredible power of your kind words.

Yesterday, that inspiration came in the form of a wonderful e-mail from Lieutenant Vin Caliguire with the 2/28 Infantry Combat Brigade in Iraq. He included a picture of him and his crew on their tank holding a copy of the new issue of ACG. He wrote, "We can't get enough of *Armchair General*. It keeps us going and maintains our strategic wits."

Lieutenant Caliguire, you make it all worthwhile. *You* keep me going. Thank you! ★

ERIC WEIDER
PUBLISHER



Lt. Vin Caliguire (left) of the 2/28 IN Combat Brigade on his Abrams tank, *Babydoll*, with the latest issue of *Armchair General* magazine. Also pictured are David Klinger (center) and Daniel Stamm (right).

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GEN. (RET) HAROLD G. "HAL" MOORE is a true American warrior and co-author of the book *We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young*.



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EDITOR'S LETTER

The Real Legacy of Erwin Rommel

This issue of *Armchair General*® features two articles on the “Desert Fox” Erwin Rommel: *What Next General?* “Rommel at El Alamein, 1942” (page 62) and *Battlefield Leader* “Monty” (page 86). The interest in everybody’s favorite Nazi general grows ever greater and his image generates as much star power today as it did in 1941-1942 when his Afrika Korps confounded British forces in the North African desert. Perhaps only General George S. Patton Jr. tops Rommel as World War II’s most famous icon.

Much of Rommel’s popularity is likely due to the fascination that the World War II German army (and its uniforms, weapons, and deadly efficient operational skill) holds for today’s students of military history. This was evident at the recent Show of Shows held in Louisville, Kentucky – America’s largest militaria fair – where three-quarters of the 1,600 dealer tables featured Third Reich militaria.

Yet there’s more to this hero worship than an interest in cool uniforms and Tiger tanks. The Rommel of legend was an honorable foe who defied Hitler and fought a gentleman’s war only to meet a martyr’s death after joining the anti-Hitler plot in 1944. Having the unique distinction of being a war hero simultaneously in his enemy’s country and his own, he posthumously became the first hero of the postwar Bundeswehr.

The problem with this well-entrenched mythology is that much of it is untrue and it distorts the *real* Rommel’s darker character. An outstanding new biography by fellow German Ralf Georg Reuth (see *Bookshelf*, page 104) rightfully acknowledges Rommel’s superb tactical skills but exposes him as an overly ambitious schemer who was obsessed

with rank and medals and who frequently went behind his superiors’ backs to promote his own career by manipulating his “special relationship” with Hitler. Obsequious and fawning to the dictator (Reuth liberally quotes Rommel’s diary and letters), he proudly flaunted “the führer’s general” sobriquet Goebbels bestowed upon him. Hitler reciprocated, becoming Rommel’s ardent sponsor and rapidly promoting him (ultimately to field marshal in 1942).



German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel remains one of the most popular World War II icons, but a revealing new book challenges the “Rommel myth.”

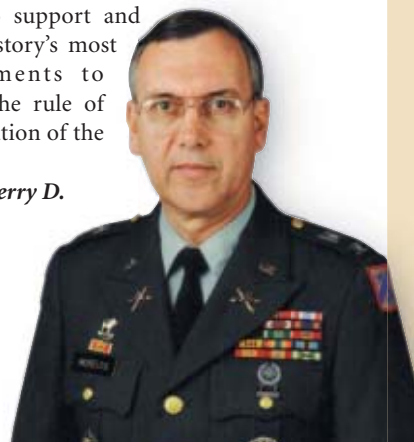
Reuth dismisses Rommel from involvement in the plot against Hitler, insisting that the general abided by the oath of loyalty that each German soldier swore to the führer. Reuth chalks up Rommel’s forced suicide to opportunistic efforts by some of his many high command enemies who implicated their nemesis in the conspiracy.

The real legacy of Erwin Rommel – and the entire World War II German officer corps – is a lesson of the dangers inherent in pledging blind obedience to a political master. As a result, Ger-

man military leaders dedicated their considerable skills to achieving the dark purpose of a ruthless dictator, excusing their own culpability in Nazi depredations with the convenient, conscience-easing “we were only following orders.”

Conversely, members of the American military swear to support and defend one of history’s most unique monuments to democracy and the rule of law – the Constitution of the United States. ★

Colonel (Ret) Jerry D. Morelock, PhD,
ARMCHAIR GENERAL Editor in Chief.



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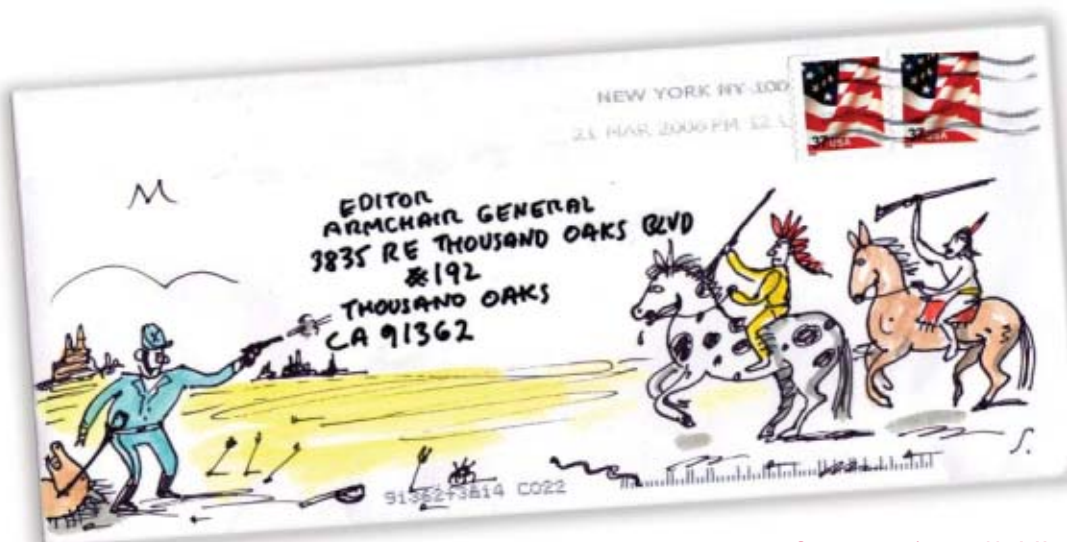


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Where in the World is ACG?



IMAGE PROVIDED BY JERRY D. MORELOCK

SEVASTOPOL, CRIMEA

Our editor in chief, Jerry Morelock, tries to bribe his way out of Russia's Crimean War army with a copy of the September 2005 issue of *Armchair General* – it worked. Jerry discovered these Ukrainian reenactors haunting the grounds of the Sevastopol Panorama Museum in August 2005.

Missing POW?

I enjoyed reading your section on the best POW movies (May 2006 issue). There were some that were mentioned that I haven't seen, so I look forward to watching them. But I was surprised that you didn't list *Hanoi Hilton*. Thank you for a great magazine.

MICHAEL KEILTY

Unfortunately, *Hanoi Hilton* is not available on DVD and therefore was ineligible for our list.

Game Review Kudos

ACG's fair and balanced reviews of games avoid the

derogatory vernacular so popular with online reviewers and allow me to make informed decisions about what wargamers want in their games. I can always expect your

reviews to be on point and be written in a manner that addresses both deficiencies and features with professionalism and attention to detail. All of this is a direct reflection of everyone involved in your operation from the top down!

CURT PANGRACS

Our game reviewers, Mark H. Walker and Jeffrey Paulding, appreciate your glowing "review" of their columns!

Baghdad Heroics

I feel that the heroics of the men who fought for Baghdad have gone totally unnoticed. We all think that Baghdad was captured in three measly days, making it seem like it was hardly a contest. However, many people don't know that the men who fought for Baghdad never had an easy battle. People don't fully understand what our warriors went through. I feel you absolutely have to publish some type of story or *You Command* game so that the brave men and women who helped capture



Marine Cpl. Edward Chin places the U.S. flag over a statue of Saddam Hussein to signify the liberation of the Iraqi people in 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Baghdad don't go unnoticed.

CHAD COTTER

Indeed, that would make a great *You Command* or *What Next General?* article. Thanks for the suggestion! We'll get someone on it.

For the inside story on the Operation Iraqi Freedom war plan that captured Baghdad and defeated Saddam's army, see this issue's *10 Questions: Colonel Kevin Benson* (page 12).

QUICK TAKES: Reader Letter Excerpts

After being a fairly active member of your online forum community, I decided to take the plunge with a three-year subscription to ACG! I felt that I owed it to you guys for letting me hang out for so long!

C. P.

Keep up the great work, love the magazine.

TONY DECARBO
FREDERICKSBURG, VA.

Hello from western Baghdad. I absolutely love *Armchair General* – it is a great magazine

CAPT. ROBERT ALLEN, INF.

I was just surfing the web and came across your site. It seems very interesting. I took a peek at all your back issue covers. They're great!

M. D.

I love the magazine and the way it actually puts you in the shoes of generals and leaders from the past. It is much more stimulating than just reading about history.

R. T.

Write to Mailbag To ask a question or share your thoughts, send a letter (with your phone number and e-mail address) to: Mailbag, *Armchair General*, 3835-R E. Thousand Oaks Boulevard #192, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362, or visit www.armchairgeneral.com. Submitted material becomes the sole property of *Armchair General* and shall constitute a grant to use your name, likeness and story in any manner deemed necessary. Materials cannot be returned.

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RALPH PETERS' CRISIS WATCH

Nigerian Nightmare

The growing threat of a brutal bloodbath in this "Frankenstein's monster" of a country risks destabilizing all of West Africa.

There's trouble in the oil fields, and this time it's not in the Middle East. Nigeria, the dominant state in West Africa and a consistent disappointment, has been troubled since it gained independence over four decades ago. The horrific civil war in the 1960s between the government and secessionist Biafra led to almost three decades of military rule with brief, failed interludes of civilian government. Nigeria became one of the world's most corrupt states as crime exploded, government officials hid stolen funds offshore, and life expectancy for the average citizen fell to below 47 years.

Now, the country faces its worst series of crises since Biafra. There's no hope of a perfect solution. The alternatives facing this vast country of 130 million deeply divided people are either to muddle through with intermittent bloodletting or crack apart in genocidal violence.

Nigeria matters. The world's 8th-largest oil and natural gas producer, it's a vital supplier for the United States. China and India increasingly look to Nigeria for petroleum as well. Rebel operations in the oil-rich southern delta – where local populations suffer ecological catastrophe as profits disappear into government pockets – include guerrilla attacks, assassinations, kidnappings of foreign oil workers, pipeline bombings and oil platform seizures. The government responds with a heavy, incompetent hand.

And that's only one set of violent problems facing this Frankenstein's monster of a country that imperial Britain patched together from ill-fitting parts.

The sharpest divide is between the Hausa-Fulani north – Muslim and politically dominant – and the Yoruba, Igbo and other tribes of the Christian-animist south (Nigeria has over 250 tribes in all). The Brits favored the Muslims, allowing them to dominate the military's upper echelons – as they still do. The situation was bad enough in the past, before the recent upsurge of Islamist fundamentalism. Now it's explosive.

Attempts to impose Islamic Sharia law in the north spark Christian outrage. Terror campaigns against transplanted Christians result in deadly backlashes against Muslims living in the south. Last winter's

global disturbances over Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed turned ugliest in Nigeria. Southern Christians responded to northern Muslim repression with a rampage in provincial cities. Dozens of Christians and hundreds of Muslims died.

The Muslim-shaded government lashes out violently but ineffectively. Nigeria's internal problems make a mockery of its regional leadership pretensions. It sends troops abroad as peacekeepers but can't

keep the peace at home. Recently lauded as a democratic success story, Nigeria's corruption-added government looks increasingly fragile. Heralded as a unifier after his free election as president, former general Olusegun Obasanjo now wants to change the law that limits him to two terms. Expect a spike in turmoil by 2007, if not before.

Watch: Military repression in the oil-rich south. Almost 100 percent of Nigeria's official export earnings (which doesn't include the country's hefty income from transnational crime) comes from southern oil and gas, but northern powerbrokers refuse to allow southerners a fair share of the revenue. If the central government relies on force alone to keep the oil flowing, the south could erupt. Meanwhile, the Chinese have begun supplying Nigeria with weapons as human-rights violations slow U.S. support.

Crisis watch bottom line: If Nigeria implodes, the consequences will go far beyond tight oil supplies. The web of potential conflicts could spread across West Africa, reversing the fragile progress in ravaged Liberia and Sierra Leone, plunging the troubled Ivory Coast into chaos, overwhelming smaller states, and flooding the region with refugees, insurgents and criminal cartels.

The best hope is government compromise that localizes the violence. But the worst Christian-Muslim bloodshed in sub-Saharan Africa may be coming to Nigeria. ★

Ralph Peters, a prizewinning novelist (under his own name and as Owen Parry), is the author of 21 books. His latest, "Never Quit the Fight," analyzes our recent engagements abroad and offers strategic alternatives for the future. A retired Army intelligence officer, strategist and commentator, Peters frequently appears in national media.



Nigerian soldiers aboard a patrol boat keep watch over a natural gas loading terminal in the oil-rich Niger Delta. Government response to increasing rebel attacks on Nigeria's oil-producing facilities only make a bad situation worse.

GEORGE ESTIVARET/CORBIS



IMAGE PROVIDED BY RALPH PETERS

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10 QUESTIONS

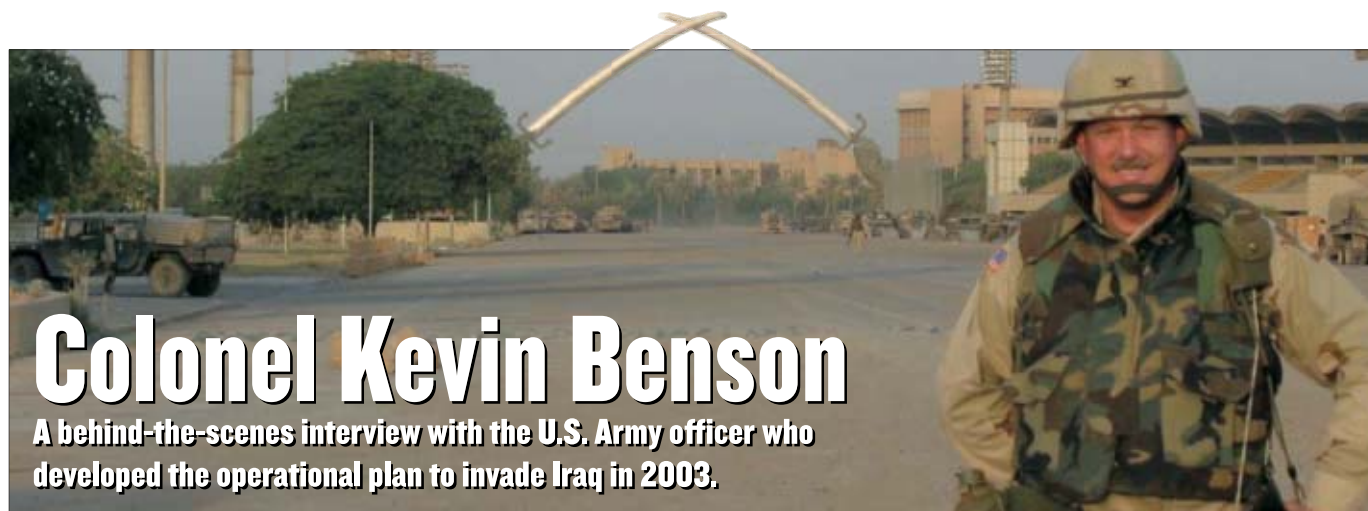


IMAGE PROVIDED BY KEVIN BENSON

Colonel Kevin Benson

A behind-the-scenes interview with the U.S. Army officer who developed the operational plan to invade Iraq in 2003.

Army Col. Kevin Benson, shown in Baghdad in April 2003, uses his experiences from OIF to educate his “Jedi Knights” at the School of Advanced Military Studies.

ACG How were you selected to develop the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) invasion plan?

COL. BENSON: I was studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Security Studies Program instead of going to the Army War College. Lieutenant General Mikolashek, Third U.S. Army commander, called and asked me to be the Third Army planner. This was before 9/11. Later, Lieutenant General McKiernan took command of Third U.S. Army/Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) and brought in a team of really superb general officers to be his primary staff. He told them that I would remain as the J5, the staff principal responsible for planning in the headquarters.

ACG What was your major planning constraint, and what was the overall objective of the plan?

COL. BENSON: People in the Department of Defense thought that since we overthrew the Taliban (in Afghanistan) with a small force and airpower, we should be able to do the same in Iraq. We engaged in an education effort, a real give-and-take process that moved toward mutual understanding of the pressures of policy and the military actions. The main objective of the campaign was to remove Saddam's regime, so we focused our efforts on ensuring that we had the best

forces possible to start the campaign, including enough logistical units to sustain an advance across the 600-plus miles from Kuwait to Baghdad.

ACG Explain the size and composition of the opposing forces.

COL. BENSON: We began the campaign with two three-star-general headquarters for U.S. and Coalition troops. These were the Army's V Corps and the Marines I Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF) headquarters. The majority of the Army units were under the direct command and control of V Corps. The Marines were under IMEF.



A convoy of leathernecks with Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 5 moves across the desert of central Iraq. RCT 5 advanced hundreds of miles and encountered countless ambushes in the first two weeks of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Iraqi forces (20 divisions) were divided between the Iraqi Regular Army, the Iraqi Republican Guard, the Special Republican Guard, and a whole host of regime-supporting groups from fedayeen to Baath Party militias. *On paper*, our ground forces attacked at a 1-6 force ratio – not a passing solution at Staff College. The incredible precision fires of our air forces – USAF, USN and USMC – changed the ratio in our favor. It was joint warfare at its best.

ACG How did the desert terrain affect your plan?

COL. BENSON: The effect was mainly logistical. We had to ensure sufficient stores of fuel, ammunition, spare parts, etcetera, and the means to deliver them in order to sustain a rapid advance to Baghdad.

ACG How did the assumption that Saddam had access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) affect your plan?

COL. BENSON: When we crossed the line of departure, I was sure we would face chemical weapons. We wargamed three potential locations where we felt Saddam would use these weapons against us: the initial crossing of the Euphrates near An Nasiriyah; the Karbala Gap; and just outside Baghdad. We all wore chemical protective clothing for the first month. We also posi-

MARINE SGT. JOSEPH R. CHENEY

When we crossed the line of departure,
I was sure we would face chemical weapons.

tioned Patriot batteries to protect key areas.

ACG Why was it vital to launch the ground attack so quickly?

COL. BENSON: We argued that ground operations should precede air operations instead of following the established norm. We felt this would attain tactical and operational surprise as well as shock other potential adversaries so that no one could assume an unwavering pattern to American operations. The opening moves were to secure the southern Iraqi oil fields, to ensure there was no "scorched earth policy," and to safeguard Iraqi oil wealth for the Iraqi people. Once the IMEF and the Corps were on their axes of advance, the challenge was to sustain the attack's momentum until we isolated Baghdad from the rest of the country.

ACG Please explain to our readers the importance of a joint campaign in modern warfare.

COL. BENSON: Joint warfare allows us to bring to bear all of the focused violence – air,

sea and ground – that superior technology provides us. It also allows us to use the total depth of an extended battle area. Joint warfare is the combined arms warfare that visionaries like Patton, Eisenhower, MacArthur, Kenney and Spruance envisioned.

ACG What is your most memorable story of the planning for OIF?

COL. BENSON: In early April 2003, I was talking with the commander of our Patriot missile force. Out of the blue, our missile alert siren went off and then we heard the double boom of Patriots being launched from the battery protecting our headquarters at Camp Doha, Kuwait. Seconds later, we heard the explosion of a successful intercept – the Iraqis had launched a missile right at our headquarters and the Patriot radar had picked it up.

ACG What are three significant lessons learned from OIF?

COL. BENSON: First, joint warfare – ground-air-sea forces working together – delivers decisive results. Second, in the execution of any plan, the enemy *always* gets a vote. Third, the decisive phase of any campaign is when you achieve the objectives of national policy. Clausewitz said that "war is an extension of policy by other means," and this is still true today.

ACG You are now director of the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Fort Leavenworth. Why are your students called "Jedi Knights"? Do you use OIF to teach these future military planners?

COL. BENSON: SAMS graduates were first called Jedi Knights during Operation Desert Storm, but it was somewhat pejorative as some folks resented their access to General Schwarzkopf. I think the term is fun – as the tenth SAMS director, I say, "I am Yoda Xth."

We adjust our curriculum to ensure our graduates are well schooled in the ability to think critically and creatively, so we do study OIF; however, we also study the operations in the Philippines (1898), the British in Malaysia, and the French in Algeria. In addition, we pose what-if scenarios. I try to educate as well as challenge the current class of Jedies in training. ★

U.S. and Coalition Forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom

U.S. V Corps

3d Infantry Division
4th Infantry Division
1st Armored Division
82d Airborne Division (two-battalion operational reserve)
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
2d Armored Cavalry Regiment
3d Armored Cavalry Regiment

I Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF)

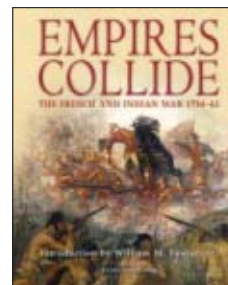
1st Marine Division
1st Armoured Division (U.K.)
3d Marine Air Wing
1st Force Service Support Group

32d Air and Missile Defense Command (Patriot missiles)

377th Theater Support Command

Special Operations Forces (SOF) under CENTCOM's Joint Special Operations Task Force command

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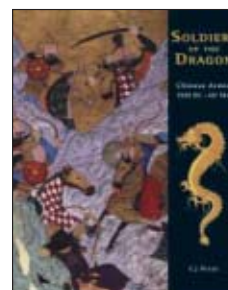
Empires Collide • \$24.95 • May 2006

The French and Indian War was a groundbreaking struggle which set the scene for the American Revolution and eventually led to the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. Complete with detailed illustrations, *Empires Collide* traces the violent combat which ranged from savage warfare in the North American frontier to city sieges and open battles.



Somme 1 July 1916 • \$18.95 • May 2006

This fully illustrated title covers the battle of Somme, one of the greatest tragedies of British military history. It opened with the slaughter of 60,000 men when British forces were sent into no man's land to face the horrors of uncut barbed wire and waves of German machinegun fire.



Soldiers of the Dragon • \$24.95 • June 2006

Throughout centuries of internal dynastic conflict and wars against foreign invaders, Chinese armies revolutionized the art of war. *Soldiers of the Dragon* is a lavishly illustrated guide to China's turbulent history from the dawn of civilization to the outbreak of the first Opium War.

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DISPATCHES

Uncommon Valor – Real Heroes

MARINE CPL. MARYALICE LEDONE



Marine Staff Sgt. Anthony L. Viggiani, now a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, receives the Navy Cross from Brig. Gen. Richard T. Tryon. He was awarded the nation's second highest honor for his exploits in Afghanistan.



MARINE CPL. ATHANASIOS L. GENOS

Maj. Gen. Richard Huck awards the Silver Star to Marine 1st Lt. Brian M. Stann. During a fight with enemy insurgents in Iraq, Stann's actions helped save the lives of several Marines under his charge.



MARINE CPL. LUCIAN FRIEL

Maj. Gen. Richard Huck awards the Silver Star to Marine 1st Lt. Jeffery T. Lee. Lee earned the medal for his brave actions during fighting in Fallujah, Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Anthony Viggiani, currently serving as a Parris Island drill instructor, recently received the Navy Cross – second only to the Medal of Honor – for his June 3, 2004, combat actions in Afghanistan. Serving with C Company, 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), squad leader Viggiani and his Marines engaged approximately 20 heavily armed anti-coalition insurgents

in close-quarter fighting in a valley outside an Afghan village. Alerted to the enemy presence by a pair of U.S. Army Apache helicopters, Viggiani tactically deployed his squad's two fire teams. When he discovered that enemy fire had pinned down one of his teams, he moved to its assistance.

Recalling the event, Viggiani said, "I saw a hole, it wasn't big. If you took off all of your gear maybe you could slip into it. I

saw some fabric. I shot three rounds in the hole and something moved, and then I shot four more rounds and threw a grenade in the hole and pinned myself against a rock."

The hole turned out to be a cave containing at least three enemy insurgents. Viggiani's fire killed the occupants, but he was wounded by enemy fire coming from another location. Blood flowed from his leg wound, but Viggiani refused medical atten-



MARINE CPL. PATRICK J. FLOYD

Marine Capt. Brian R. von Kraus stands at attention after receiving the Silver Star for his gallant actions during combat in Fallujah, Iraq.

tion and instead led his squad against the remaining insurgents. By the end of the firefight, 14 of the enemy lay dead.

At his February 2006 award ceremony, Viggiani stated, "You will never know what you can do until you are put in the situation. Individuals will rise or fall to the occasion." Viggiani credits his squad for his award. "It wasn't one individual action; my boys played a huge role and so did the training we received."

Story by Corporal Darhonda Rodela

Army Sergeant First Class Terry Mulligan received the third highest medal for heroism for his combat actions while securing the Baghdad International Airport on April 3, 2003. A scout and platoon sergeant in the 7th Infantry Regiment at the time, Mulligan and four of his Soldiers quickly responded to an enemy threat after receiving a report that approximately 100 of Saddam Hussein's fedayeen fighters were advancing against Americans in another sector. Using grenades and anti-tank weapons, Mulligan's men helped defeat the attack.

Of note, this was the same combat action in which Army

Sergeant First Class Paul Smith lost his life. Smith received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his heroic actions in the fire-fight. (See *Dispatches*, September 2005 issue.)

U.S. Marine Corps **First Lieutenant Brian M. Stann** received the Silver Star for his actions during Operation Matarador, May 8-14, 2005, near Karabilah, Iraq. As the 2d Mobile Assault Platoon leader for Weapons Company, 2d Regiment, 2d Marine Division, Stann led his Marines in an attempt to seize a bridge but was ambushed by an enemy force detonating improvised explosive devices and firing rocket propelled grenades and machine guns. Stann's unit defeated the attack, calling in close air support and coordinating direct fire from supporting tanks to rout the enemy.

Stann credited the skill and endurance of his Marines during the weeklong operation and claimed that he had already received an award he considered higher than the Silver Star. He explained, "You can forget all the other medals; I just wanted the award that said 42 out of 42 men came home safely. And we all came home, so mission accomplished."

Story by Corporal Athanasios L. Genos

Marine **First Lieutenant Jeffrey T. Lee** earned his Silver Star for a combat action during the bitter fighting for Fallujah in November 2004. Lee was a platoon commander in the 2d Tank Battalion and was in the first vehicle to seize a foothold in the embattled Iraqi city. However, he paid a stiff admission price – a bullet wound to his arm. Lee recalled, "We were running short on [ammunition], so I reached

up out of my tank to get a pop-up shot off, and that's when I got shot. I felt [it] immediately, so I got back down in the tank and my Marines helped me put a roll of duct tape on my arm to stop the bleeding and [we] continued on."

Refusing medical attention, Lee maneuvered his tank through two additional city blocks amidst heavy enemy fire. His actions were instrumental in his battalion's ability to seize its objective and helped break the back of enemy resistance.

Thanking his Marines, Lee stated, "I wouldn't be standing here today if it weren't for them. [They] deserve all the credit."

Story by Lance Corporal Lucian Friel

The third Marine Corps Silver Star awardee is **Captain Brian R. von Kraus**, whose heroic actions also occurred in Fallujah. On January 25, 2004, then-Lieutenant von Kraus was a platoon commander in Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division. He led 15 Marines in five vehicles as they patrolled south of the city. After surprising an enemy force that was preparing an ambush, von Kraus led three assaults amidst heavy fire from the enemy's 12.7 mm machine gun and small arms, which had disabled several Marine vehicles. Braving the "kill zone" numerous times, von Kraus succeeded in knocking out the adversary's positions with rifle fire and grenades.

At the award ceremony, von Kraus remarked, "The mission was a success because the Marines in my platoon kicked ass and followed their training all the way through. This is more like a platoon award than an individual award."

Story by Lance Corporal Patrick J. Floto

Memorial Planned for Combined Operations Command

Britain's Combined Operations Command of World War II is receiving a long overdue memorial. After its inception in the wake of the British Expeditionary Force's defeat in France and evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940, Combined Operations – an ancestor of today's Special Operations forces – conducted dozens of "hit-and-run" commando raids on enemy targets. Until the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944, Combined Operations provided Britain and the Allies with one of the few means available by which to strike back at Axis targets on continental

Europe. During commando raids at locations such as St. Nazaire and Dieppe produced heavy casualties among the raiders; this project memorializes the sacrifices of these men who helped pave the way for D-Day and eventual Allied victory.

The Combined Operations Memorial will be located on the grounds of the National Memorial Arboretum in the grove of the Allied Special Forces Association in Staffordshire, England. A

commemorative fundraising commando march held on April 8, 2006, included the participation of re-enactor groups realistically portraying World War II commandos.

ACG readers interested in supporting this worthwhile memorial that recognizes the courage and sacrifice of one of World War II's most important combat commands can visit combinedops.com. In addition to instructions on how to donate, the website contains historical photographs, testimony of veterans, and a wealth of information about the command's wartime record.



This sentry standing guard at the Commando Memorial wears an authentic World War II uniform and carries a weapon similar to those used by the Commandos.

DISPATCHES

Homeland Security – World War II Style



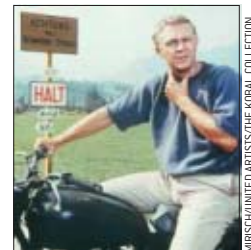
The folks laboring on America's home front during World War II may not have had to endure long lines at airport security checkpoints or deal with today's sometimes confusing "color-coded terror alert status" warnings, but they were nonetheless constantly reminded of "The Threat." The thousands of posters appearing during the war not only urged civilians to do their part by buying war bonds and stamps, they also cautioned people to remain persistently vigilant because the enemy was always listening.



"Great Escape" Hero Dies at 102

Royal Air Force squadron leader **Eric Foster**, who as a POW in Nazi Germany confounded his captors by escaping seven times, died March 26, 2006, at his home in Gloucestershire, England. He was 102 years old.

Shot down in 1940 during World War II, Foster doggedly tried to get back into the war for the next four years but was recaptured after each of his escapes. The 1963 film *The Great Escape* (selected by ACG as one of the best POW films; see *DVD Library* "Inside the Wire," May 2006) was based on the book by Australian World War II pilot and novelist Paul Brickhill and featured a character whose daring exploits closely mirrored Foster's. The film, however, portrayed the POW as an American pilot played by Steve McQueen, one of Hollywood's top box office draws (right). Since the historical "Great Escape" was a nearly all-British affair, the people of Great Britain strongly criticized the choice of a Yank to play the leading character.



Despite the controversy, McQueen's outstanding performance (at the time, he was Hollywood's reigning "King of Cool") seems a fitting and lasting tribute to Foster's heroic wartime exploits. May he rest in peace.

ON THE WEB

Red Bulls in Iraq – Reports From the Front

Armchair General's website (armchairgeneral.com) now features an exclusive new series of reports directly from the front lines of Iraq. Captain Fernando A. Franco of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division (the Red Bulls) of the Minnesota National Guard recently started a one-year tour in Iraq and has agreed to send us periodical accounts of his unit's activities. Although for security reasons he may have to omit some sensitive information regarding specific mission details, Captain Franco's reports will in effect put YOU on the front line right alongside his Soldiers. Get an insider's glimpse into how the war is being fought.

Captain Franco also wants to hear from *you*, our readers! E-mail him at franco@armchairgeneral.com to let him know what you think of his reports and to give him ideas for subjects that you'd like him to cover. Understandably, his military duties will likely prevent any personal responses, but he's promised to do his best to address reader suggestions in future postings.

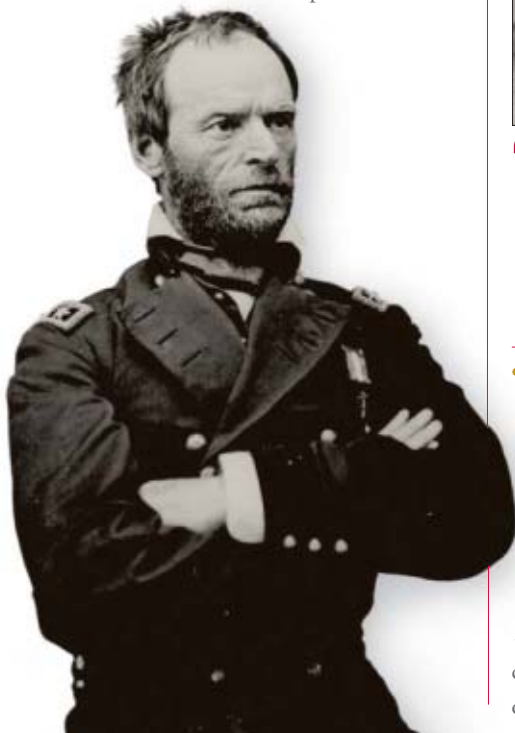
Check out the 34th's website (redbullweb.com) as well as ACG's webpage for the latest information about some of the finest young Americans this country has ever produced.

Go Desert Bulls!

FIGHTING WORDS

“I would make this war as severe as possible, and show no symptoms of tiring till the South begs for mercy.”

— Gen. William T. Sherman, September 17, 1863



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“Do they know we are listening to them?”

— Stalin’s revealing question regarding the “Big Three’s” private living areas at the Tehran Conference, 1943.

“If you couldn’t get the Kraut in his factory, it was just as easy to knock him off in his bed; and if ol’ Granny Schickelgruber in the suite next door got the chop, well, that’s hard luck.”

— RAF World War II Bomber Command crewman’s words during a *World at War* documentary interview.

“The Nazi’s entered this war with the rather childish delusion that they were going to bomb everybody else and that nobody was going to bomb them. ... They sowed the wind, and now they are going to reap the whirlwind.”

— Air Marshal Arthur “Bomber” Harris, RAF Bomber Command, in a 1942 newsreel.



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DISPATCHES

Army Gets a Museum

After years of planning, the United States Army is getting its own museum dedicated to documenting the evolution of America's oldest military service from its origins during the Colonial era through its current role on the front lines of the War on Terrorism. Many readers are likely familiar with some of the museums already in the Army's system – the outstanding Frontier Army Museum at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, stands out. Yet it is envisioned that the new museum will be the system's "crown jewel" and will showcase



how the American Soldier has been intricately interwoven into the fabric of our society.

Although several sites in the Washington, D.C., area were considered, the National Army Museum will be located at historic Fort Belvoir, Virginia, just south of the capital and not far from Mount Vernon, home of the U.S. Army's first commander in chief, George Washington. The Army's Center of Military History has literally *tons* of historic uniforms, equipment and artifacts from which to select the very best examples, so visitors can expect a truly world-class experience once the museum opens.

ACG readers interested in donating and becoming part of this history-making new museum can visit the Army Historical Foundation's website at armyhistory.org.

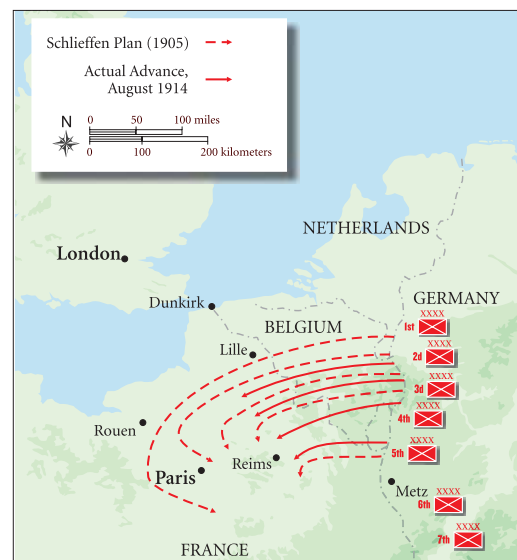
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U.S. ARMY

AUGUST 1914

German Invasion of Belgium and France Starts World War I

Forsaking the bolder invasion plan developed by Germany's Count von Schlieffen in 1905, which directed a sweeping envelopment around Paris, German Chief of Staff Helmuth von Moltke (the younger) launches his armies against those of Belgium, Britain and France along a greatly modified path. Nervous over Russian threats in the East and fearing his left wing would prove too weak to stand up to a French attack in Alsace, von Moltke fatally weakens the armies of his right wing. In doing so, he ignores the advice of his predecessors to "keep the right wing strong" and to "let the last man on the right brush the Channel with his sleeve."

Moltke's modifications to Schlieffen's plan result in the German army being stopped cold at France's Marne River, producing a four-year stalemate and nightmarish trench warfare on the Western Front.



The German invasion of Belgium and France in 1914 differed in several key aspects from the plan developed in 1905 by Schlieffen. As a result, the French "miracle on the Marne" stopped the German army in its tracks and saved France.

SEPTEMBER 1936

International Involvement in the Spanish Civil War Begins

In what many perceive as a dress rehearsal for World War II, Spain witnesses a bloody civil war that begins when future dictator Francisco Franco leads a revolt of Nationalist army units against the coalition of feuding factions that form the Republican government. Within weeks, foreign powers begin sending "volunteers" to fight, with Germany and Italy supporting the Nationalist side and the Soviet Union backing the Republicans. In response to a worldwide propaganda campaign fo-



Members of the XV International Brigade stand in formation during the Spanish Civil War. These volunteers from Britain, the Balkans, Belgium, France, the United States and Ireland joined numerous military personnel sent from Stalin's Russia to fight the fascists in Spain.

mented by the Moscow-controlled Communist International (Comintern), Socialists, Communists and left-leaning sympathizers from Germany, England, France, the U.S. and several other countries form fighting units called International Brigades to bolster the "anti-fascist" forces. Filled more with martial ardor than military skill, the brigades fight bravely, if not very effectively.

Soviet military assistance (commanders, tanks, planes and small arms) prove extensive and valuable, but the brutal Stalinist-style enforcement of "party discipline" within the Republican ranks often means more time is spent shooting members of opposing Republican factions than fighting the rebel Nationalists. Within two years, the brigades are gone and Franco is Spain's master.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Guns Galore! Over 80 million AK-47 assault rifles (and variants) have been manufactured since production began.

Overkill? The U.S. military dropped nearly 400,000 tons of napalm on targets during the Vietnam War (1963-1975).

Losers' Fate. Of the approximately 2,500 German generals who served in World War II, 786 died during the war (among other causes, 253 were KIA, 81 were suicides, and 23 were executed by Hitler).

Highest Honor. Since its creation in 1861, 3,461 Medals of Honor have been



A DeHavilland Mosquito fighter-bomber soars through the sky over Europe during World War II.

awarded. Today there are 113 living recipients, the youngest of whom is 55.

Fighting Frenchmen. The Normandie Squadron (French pilots flying for the Red air force during World War II) flew 1,200 combat sorties and shot down 188 German planes. Two members received the Order of Lenin and 41 pilots were killed in action.

Woodpecker's Dream. The twin-engine DeHavilland Mosquito, Britain's ultra-speedy World War II fighter-bomber, was nicknamed the "Wooden Wonder" because it was constructed chiefly of plywood.

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DISPATCHES

GEAR

Seen and Heard

By Jeanine Detz

That minimalist lifestyle you're forced to endure during a hitch just won't cut it on the outside. Whether you're reenacting a battle, hunting quail or just hanging out at home, it's all about technology. This month, we're decoding the tech-toy must-haves in sight and sound.

1 Kodak EasyShare V570

Trying to squeeze an entire squadron (or little league team) into one group shot? The V570 makes it easy. It's the first point-and-shoot digital camera with two lenses – a wide angle and zoom. Plus, if your buddy's in a snafu, use the video feature to record the adventure and then replay it on the 2.5-inch display. All this in a slim package that fits in your rucksack pocket. \$399.95, kodak.com

2 Victorinox s.beat

The s.beat integrates an audio player with 1 GB of storage into a classic Swiss Army knife setup. All the usual suspects are present – blades, scissors, tweezers and file – plus room for more than 200 of your favorite songs. And the masterminds at Victorinox even remembered one crucial detail: You can detach the player from the knife and take it on board your flights without being flagged by security. \$200, victorinox.com



3 iPod Hi-Fi

Unless you've been living in a foxhole, you own an iPod. With Apple's iPod Hi-Fi you no longer have to listen to your tunes streaming out of some mini-speakers on your computer. The Hi-Fi is ready to go right out of the box and even charges your iPod while it plays. Measuring less than 7 inches high and 17 inches wide, it switches to DC power mode with the help of six batteries – perfect for a campsite. \$349, apple.com



4 Ultimate Ears

If you're still using the chintzy headphones that come with most MP3 players, you're missing out. Once you get over the feeling of in-the-ear headphones, you'll understand why rock stars use them. These compact earbuds deliver crystal-clear sound while providing 26 decibels of noise isolation to block out racket such as the screaming kid in the next row or your bunkmate's snoring. \$250, ultimateears.com



5 Sirius S50

You *need* satellite radio (at least that's what we're all beginning to believe). The Sirius S50 is compact and portable, allowing you to make good use of that monthly subscription fee both at home and on the road. Sports fanatics take note: A ticker feature gives you scores from any play-by-play broadcast, and you can set an alert to tell you when your favorite team plays. Store up to 50 hours of content in the S50's 1 GB of memory and listen to Stern or Limbaugh (hey, there's one in every platoon) on *your* time. \$430, sirius.com



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DISPATCHES

GEAR

6



6 Bushnell Instant Replay

Play referee. These 8x20 mm magnification binoculars can take high-resolution digital photos and record video loops. No mere techie's delight, the Instant Replay hasn't forgotten its roots – it's still a high-powered sight helper. Fold-down eyecups, coated lenses and a compact size make it equally ideal for big-game hunts and Super Bowl Sundays. \$600, bushnell.com

7 Audiovox Flat Panel LCD TV

Pull rank – you deserve it. Whether you're having the troops over to watch the big game or going for the next level in *Take Command*, you can come up with plenty of justifications for upgrading your TV. Audiovox's summer entry into the flat territory is HDTV-ready and features a digital tuner and SRS Surround Sound. Its 37-inch screen is large enough to make the neighbors jealous but refined enough for the missus. \$2,495, audiovox.com

7



8



8 MacGyver MP3 Watch

Rock out while in a hooch, on a trail, or in your rack. The MacGyver places on your wrist up to 1 GB of tunes, a voice recorder and stereo sound. In a hitch, you can even use the ThumbDrive to store and transfer data. When the headphones and USB cable are off, you have a good-looking timepiece that your better half just might mistake for an accessory. \$180, skullcandy.com

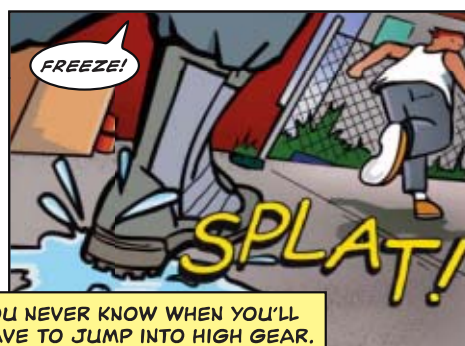
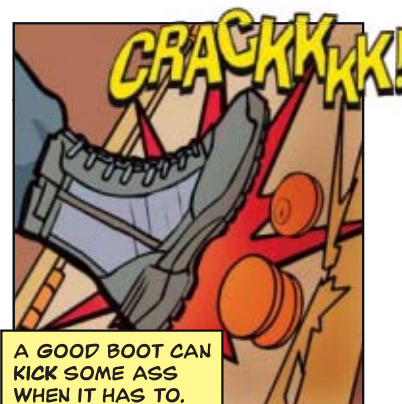
9 Panasonic In-Dash DVD Receiver/Monitor

When you've traded in your two-seater for something of the Jeep Commander variety, it's time to invest in an entertainment system that fits the ride. Panasonic's latest in-dash receiver plays CDs, is Bluetooth-ready for cell phones, and easily connects to the optional 7-inch monitor for DVD viewing. Surround-sound audio, high-resolution touch-screen controls, and easy out-of-the-box setup are extras that any general (or soccer dad) will appreciate. \$1,000 for receiver; \$300 for monitor, panasonic.com

9



6. BUSHNELL PERFORMANCE OPTICS, 7. AUDIOVOX CORPORATION, 8. SKULLCANDY, INC., 9. PANASONIC CORPORATION OF NORTH AMERICA



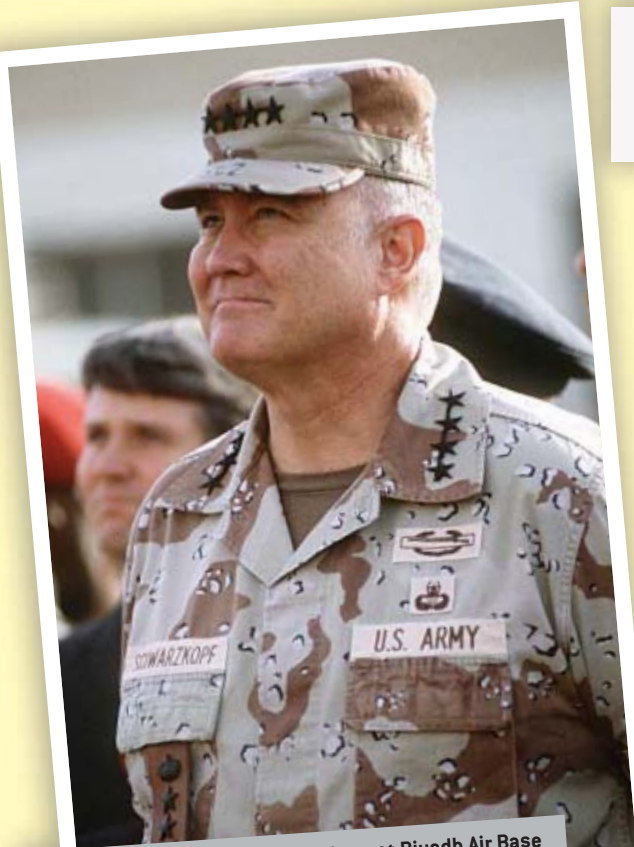
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General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

From the jungles of Vietnam to the sands of Desert Storm, America's "Stormin' Norman" was a force to be reckoned with.



Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, seen here at Riyadh Air Base during Operation Desert Storm in 1991, awaits the arrival of prisoners of war released by the Iraqi government.

COMMANDER DOSSIER

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, America's public face for Operation Desert Storm, commanded a tenuous, untested international military alliance that opposed Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Under his command, coalition forces attacked Saddam Hussein's numerically superior, combat-experienced Iraqi army and achieved one of history's most stunning victories.

EARLY INFLUENCES

Born Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf Jr. on August 22, 1934, in Pennington, New Jersey, he later changed his name to simply H. Norman Schwarzkopf. His father had organized the New Jersey state police in 1921, and later, in 1932, spearheaded the investigation of the crime of the century – the kidnapping and murder of hero-aviator Charles A. Lindbergh's baby. A West Point graduate, the father instilled in his son from an early age the academy's motto: Duty, honor, country.

Young Schwarzkopf learned to compartmentalize his feelings and became, in his words, "self-contained and independent." He attributed these traits to his mother's alcoholism, which pro-

duced in her a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality. The situation was exacerbated by his father's absence during World War II when, as a colonel, the elder Schwarzkopf served in Iran funneling Lend-Lease supplies to the Soviet Union.

Following the war, at age 12, the boy spent a year in Iran while his father organized the Shah's security forces. Schwarzkopf claimed that the experience taught him respect for Islam and that he gained an affection for Middle Easterners.

VIETNAM

Schwarzkopf followed his father's footsteps to West Point and graduated as a second lieutenant on June 5, 1956. He requested service in the infantry branch because he was impressed with its élan. His military heroes were Alexander the Great, Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman – "muddy boots" commanders who shared their men's trials.

After earning his paratrooper's badge with the 101st Airborne, Schwarzkopf spent two years (1959-1961) in Cold War-era Berlin. Then, in 1964, he requested release from a teaching obligation at West Point to serve in Vietnam as an adviser to the South Vietnamese Airborne Brigade. While still a captain there, he infuriated a colonel when he canceled a planned attack because none of the promised support was provided. Fortunately, his immediate superior backed his decision. Schwarzkopf was wounded twice while in Vietnam and, on one occasion, entered a deadly minefield to rescue a wounded Soldier.

Schwarzkopf, known for his fiery temper, became so angry with Vietnam-era anti-war protesters that he and his sister Ruth – a peace activist – didn't speak to each other for years. He was contemptuous of officers he considered self-serving or incompetent, or those who put their own careers ahead of their men's lives. He later publicly denounced the war's "body count" mentality as a corrupting influence that forced Army officers to lie about enemy casualties.

THE BEAR

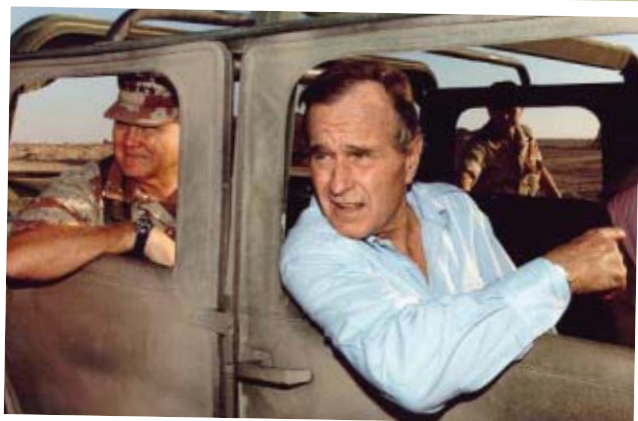
Following Vietnam, the U.S. Army stumbled along for several years attempting to regain its sense of self and purpose. Schwarzkopf considered resigning, but he stayed the course in hopes of being part of the solution.

Schwarzkopf's demands for excellence and his hot temper made him difficult to work under and earned him the nickname "the Bear." However, he never bore grudges and always looked out for his troops. Although the Bear was mostly grizzly, it was part teddy.

In October 1983, Schwarzkopf was a ground troop commander during Operation Urgent Fury, the evacuation of 224

ALL IMAGES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Under Schwarzkopf's command, coalition forces attacked Saddam Hussein's numerically superior, combat-experienced Iraqi army and achieved one of history's most stunning victories.



November 22, 1990. President George H. W. Bush and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf visit with troops in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield.

U.S. CENTCOM Commander Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf consults with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell about the Allied military coalition during Operation Desert Shield.

ASSESSMENT OF SCHWARZKOPF:

- Nicknames: Stormin' Norman, the Bear
- Revealing quote: "When you dance with the Bear, you don't stop 'til the Bear gets tired."
- Quick tempered and demanding

American college students from Grenada after a communist-leaning coup. The mission succeeded, but cooperation among the armed services was poor and Schwarzkopf constantly had to improvise. Urgent Fury's mistakes helped spur his generation to reform America's joint warfighting capability. In 1990, he had the chance to test those reforms.

STORMIN' NORMAN

On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army invaded neighboring Kuwait. Schwarzkopf was a four-star general commanding Central Command (CENTCOM), the Department of Defense command with responsibility for the Middle East. Soon he was leading an uneasy coalition of American, European and Arab troops assembled to defend Saudi Arabia and preparing to liberate Kuwait. Cultural differences and an enemy that outnumbered his own force 4-to-1 were only some of the many obstacles he had to overcome. Through television briefings and press conferences, Schwarzkopf became the "Stormin' Norman" figure – a new folk hero who was the most recognized personality of the highly televised war.

Schwarzkopf used his enemy's experience from the eight-year Iraq-Iran War (static defense against a technologically inferior opponent) to set up the Iraqi army for defeat. CENTCOM planners prepared a campaign to knock out the Iraqi command's "brain" and "eyes" with airpower followed by a ground war "body punch" of rapid maneuver.

THE 100-HOUR WAR

Under cover of a clever deception plan that mimicked both a frontal assault and a Marine-led amphibious invasion, CENT-



COM planners sent forces racing around the Iraqi right flank as much as 530 miles northwest of Kuwait, thus sweeping around the Iraqis' static defenses while other coalition troops held the enemy in place.

Penetrating 200 miles into Iraq, Operation Desert Storm was the fastest, deepest single attack in American military history. Hussein's army quickly shattered, and Kuwait was liberated. Using football analogy, Stormin' Norman famously called it a Hail Mary, but it most closely resembled a classic end around. The ground war lasted just 100 hours.

Schwarzkopf was most pleased that coalition forces suffered far fewer casualties than anyone, including himself, had expected. It was a fitting tribute to the Grizzly's deft leadership. ★

Gerald D. Swick is a writer and historian whose works have appeared in "The Encyclopedia of World War II: A Political, Social and Military History," "Lincoln Lore," and other publications.

SEE:

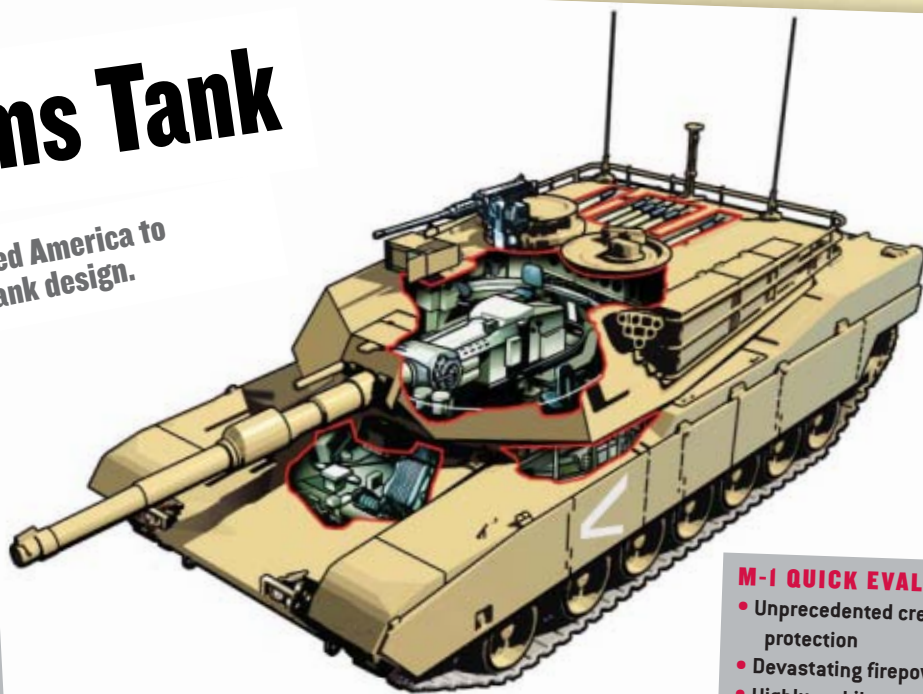
In the Eye of the Storm: The Life of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf by Roger Cohen and Claudio Gatti. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991.

It Doesn't Take a Hero: The Autobiography of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf. Written with Peter Petre. Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1992.

M-1 Abrams Tank

The series that pushed America to the forefront in tank design.

The M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank made its combat debut in Operation Desert Storm (1991) when it was used to spearhead the attack against Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Composite steel and ceramic armor protect the Abrams and, to date, none has ever been destroyed by an enemy tank.



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WEAPON FILES

During most of World War II, U.S. tanks were decidedly inferior in design and performance to the German PzKw V Panther and the monstrous PzKw VI Tiger. Yet quantity made up for quality in battlefield engagements, and American tanks often overwhelmed German panzers by their sheer force of numbers.

By the 1960s, however, U.S. designers faced the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, enemies whose armored forces could not be overpowered by numbers alone. The quest to build a better tank resulted in the M-1 Abrams, the first American-designed tank to be described as the finest in the world.

THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT TANK

In 1972, General Creighton W. Abrams, the Army's chief of staff and a renowned armor commander during World War II, set the parameters for the Army's new tank. To provide critical mobility, he settled on a top weight of 58 tons; however, the current M1A2 weighs in at 72 tons. Chrysler Corporation created the original design, but General Dynamics took over production after buying out Chrysler's defense division.

The M-1's gas-turbine engine provides greater reliability than a comparable diesel, while requiring 30 percent fewer parts. The tank can accelerate from zero to 20 mph in about seven seconds, and its top cross-country speed of 30 mph is twice that of the Army's previous main battle tank, the M-60. The M-1's top road speed, 45 mph, is less than the Soviet T-72's 50 mph, but slightly faster than the heavier T-80's 43 mph. An engine

governor reduces speed somewhat but provides greater control and comfort over rough terrain.

The original M-1 had a British-designed 105 mm gun, but the upgraded M1A1 and M1A2 use an American version of a German-designed 120 mm smoothbore cannon that can destroy enemy armor at over two miles (3.2 kilometers). A computerized fire-control system makes "shooting on the move" as accurate as stationary fire, and advanced thermal imaging (with up to 50X magnification) identifies targets even in poor visibility.

COMBAT PROVEN

M-1 crews enjoy unprecedented protection, thanks to a combination of rolled steel and Chobham armor (layered steel plates and ceramic tiles). In May 1982, a skin of dense, depleted uranium armor was added to the turret's front. A "blowout" plate vents deadly explosions away from the crew should a round penetrate the ammunition compartment.

Recent conflicts demonstrate the protection offered by the tank's design. For instance, only 18 M-1s were severely damaged during Operation Desert Storm (nine of them by friendly fire) and no crewmembers were killed. In the first two years of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 80 M-1s were severely damaged and, tragically, five crewmen died; yet this tank casualty rate is still phenomenally low. ★

Gerald D. Swick is a writer and historian whose works have appeared in "The Encyclopedia of World War II: A Political, Social and Military History," "Lincoln Lore," and other publications.

ARMY STAFF SGT. AARON ALLMON II



Soldiers from the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment provide security with their M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank during a cordon-and-search operation in Biaj, Iraq.

SEE:

M-1 Abrams at War by Michael Green & Greg Stewart. Zenith Press, 2005.
M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank 1982-92 by Steven J. Zaloga. Osprey Publishing, 1993.

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COMMAND DECISIONS

Ike's Bulge Dilemma

Faced with a powerful German counteroffensive in the Ardennes, Eisenhower had to choose between America's Bradley and Britain's Montgomery.

Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower faced a critical command decision as strong German panzer and infantry formations breached the thinly held American lines and drove deep into the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg in December 1944. Caught by surprise, the Allied command was immediately forced into damage-control mode.

Although Ike at once recognized the seriousness of the German threat, he was frustrated when his most trusted subordinate, 12th Army Group commander, Omar N. Bradley, remained wedded to his command post far south in Luxembourg City. Bradley at one time had believed so much in the absolute necessity of commanders making personal visits to units that he relieved a division commander when he found both him and the assistant division commander in their command post at the same time. However, now Bradley claimed that he could control the U.S. Army's greatest battle by telephone.

Eisenhower felt it was essential for the commander to be close to the action. Thus, he faced a dilemma: Should he allow Bradley to retain control of his forces, thereby gambling the outcome of the Western Front's most desperate battle, or was more drastic action necessary? Ike's ultimate decision turned out to be the proverbial two-edged sword – razor-sharp on the one hand, but tragically dull on the other.

DARKEST HOUR

Although American Soldiers, individually

and in small groups, made determined stands against overwhelming odds to slow Hitler's last offensive, their higher commands suffered serious problems. This was particularly true at the embattled First U.S. Army headquarters.

First Army, the senior and most experienced of the three armies assigned to Bradley's



As German divisions pushed deeper into the Ardennes region, Allied Supreme Commander, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower faced a daunting dilemma: Should he trust his close friend Gen. Omar Bradley or the meticulous and careful British commander, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery?

12th Army Group, was under the command of General Courtney Hodges. A George Marshall protégé, Hodges was later described by one of the battle's most successful generals as "a poor excuse for an Army commander ... too old and too frail." Even Bradley, who was protective of Hodges and made excuses for his failures, later admitted, "He was not a man like Patton, who naturally radiated unbounded confidence and dogged determination."

Hodges was overwhelmed by the German attack that cut his army in two during the offensive's first days, and his physical demeanor reflected his inability to cope. He increasingly relied on his chief of staff, Major General William Kean, to keep First Army functioning and in the fight. Bradley observed, "Now, as I knew, Hodges was sounding more and more depressed at a time when we needed Pattonesque bravado."

Incredibly, as Hodges collapsed during the first four days of the battle, neither Bradley nor any principal staff officer of 12th Army Group made an effort to visit First Army headquarters to assess the dire situation and take the steps necessary to remedy it. By refusing to do so, Bradley gave Eisenhower no choice but to make the morally courageous decision to relieve his close friend of command of all U.S.

forces in the northern half of the Bulge and place them under the one man Bradley despised most, British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. Consequently, Bradley later described this period as his "darkest hour."

Bradley's command was reduced to only the Third U.S. Army. Since Patton needed no help orchestrating his brilliant counteroffensive, Bradley was superfluous for the rest of the Battle of the Bulge.

THE DULL EDGE OF THE SWORD

Montgomery assumed command of the Bulge's northern half on December 21, 1944. With characteristic thoroughness and attention to detail, he immediately set about bringing desperately needed order to the chaotic situation. He reorganized units, established liaison to all subordinate levels, positioned British units behind the Meuse River in case the Germans made it that far, and began planning for an Allied counterattack.

To organize and lead the coming counteroffensive, Montgomery selected the U.S. Army's most aggressive corps commander, Major General J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins. Had he the authority, Monty would have relieved Hodges of command when he first discovered the true state of affairs on his initial visit to First Army headquarters. Eisenhower, however, was reluctant to antagonize Marshall by relieving a senior American general and therefore rejected Monty's suggestion.

Despite the correctness of Eisenhower's "Allied" decision, it had a serious disadvantage – the dull side of the two-edged sword. Methodical, cautious and painstakingly slow, Montgomery was not the commander Ike needed to initiate a bold and rapid counterattack to trap the bulk of German forces before they could retreat once again behind the safety of the Siegfried line. Predictably, Monty took too long "tidying up" the battlefield before launching Collins on the counterstroke Ike so badly wanted. After months of experience working with Montgomery, Eisenhower should have known better. ★

Colonel (Ret) Jerry D. Morelock, PhD, is Editor in Chief of ARMCHAIR GENERAL.

Play it! Experience the Battle of the Bulge by playing Matrix Games' "Ardennes Offensive" scenario in *Korsun Pocket*; HPS's *Bulge '44*; and Avalon Hill's *Axis and Allies Battle of the Bulge*. Visit playit.armchairgeneral.com for more games.

With characteristic thoroughness and attention to detail, Monty immediately set about bringing desperately needed order to the chaotic situation.



- 1 Soldiers of the 84th Infantry Division move through Samree, Belgium, in early January 1945.
- 2 The surprise German Ardennes offensive split Eisenhower's Allied armies, leading him to make the controversial command decision to place Britain's Montgomery in command of all U.S. forces in the northern half of the Bulge.
- 3 Soldiers of the 3d Armored Division wait in defensive positions near Sadzot, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge.
- 4 Soldiers from the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division move through snow-covered Belgium during the fighting in the Ardennes.
- 5 Montgomery and Bradley examine a situation map in the summer of 1944. To Bradley's dismay, Ike turned over most of Bradley's command to British Field Marshal Montgomery, the one man the 12th Army Group commander despised most.
- 6 In January 1945, American Soldiers of the 289th Infantry Regiment march through the snow on their way to cut off the St. Vith-Houffalize road in Belgium.



LEADERSHIP

General William Tecumseh Sherman

**War may be hell, but the business world can be just as challenging.
Hone your leadership skills with lessons from the Civil War's "total war" general.**

The Union leader who kept his promise to "make Georgia howl" brought war-ending destruction to the South during his epic March to the Sea in 1864. Sherman waged "total war" before the term was even invented, and he was successful because he understood how to motivate Soldiers, both on and off the battlefield.

Loyalty – Up, Down, and to Peers

Loyalty in business, as in war, is critical to success and involves not only how one treats those of higher rank, but equally important, how one treats subordinates and peers. The give-and-take of business requires faith in others to do what is best for the organization. Sherman embraced the value of loyalty. For instance, he said of his relationship with U.S. Grant, "Grant stood by me when I was crazy, and I stood by him when he was drunk, and now we stand by each other."

Be a Leader, First and Always

In today's business environment, it is common to find blurred lines of authority and operation. Sherman felt it was important for those in charge always to act as leaders. Cautioning against becoming so friendly with subordinates that the difference between leader and employee disappeared, he said, "The true way to be popular with troops is not to be free and familiar with them, but to make them believe you know more than they do."

Use Common Sense

"What is grand strategy? Common sense applied to the art of war," Sherman once said. In his battle plans and discussions of strategy and tactics, he emphasized utilizing a practical approach when planning. Simplicity is key, and trying to come up with an out-of-the-box solution to every problem may well pose new challenges.

Operate Leanly

Too often in business, leaders are tempted to increase staff in the belief that bigger is somehow better. Sherman, however, worried about having too many people in the decision train. He believed in operating leanly, saying, "A bulky staff implies a division of responsibility, slowness of action, and indecision; whereas a small staff implies activity and concentration of purpose."

Understand the Organization's "Soul"

Every great organization has some special quality that separates it from the competition. Such businesses also understand the proper blending of a mission with the human resources available to accomplish the task. As Sherman described it, "There is a soul to an army as well as to the individual man, and no general can accomplish the full work of his army unless he commands the soul of his men as well as their bodies and legs."

Have Healthy Self-Confidence

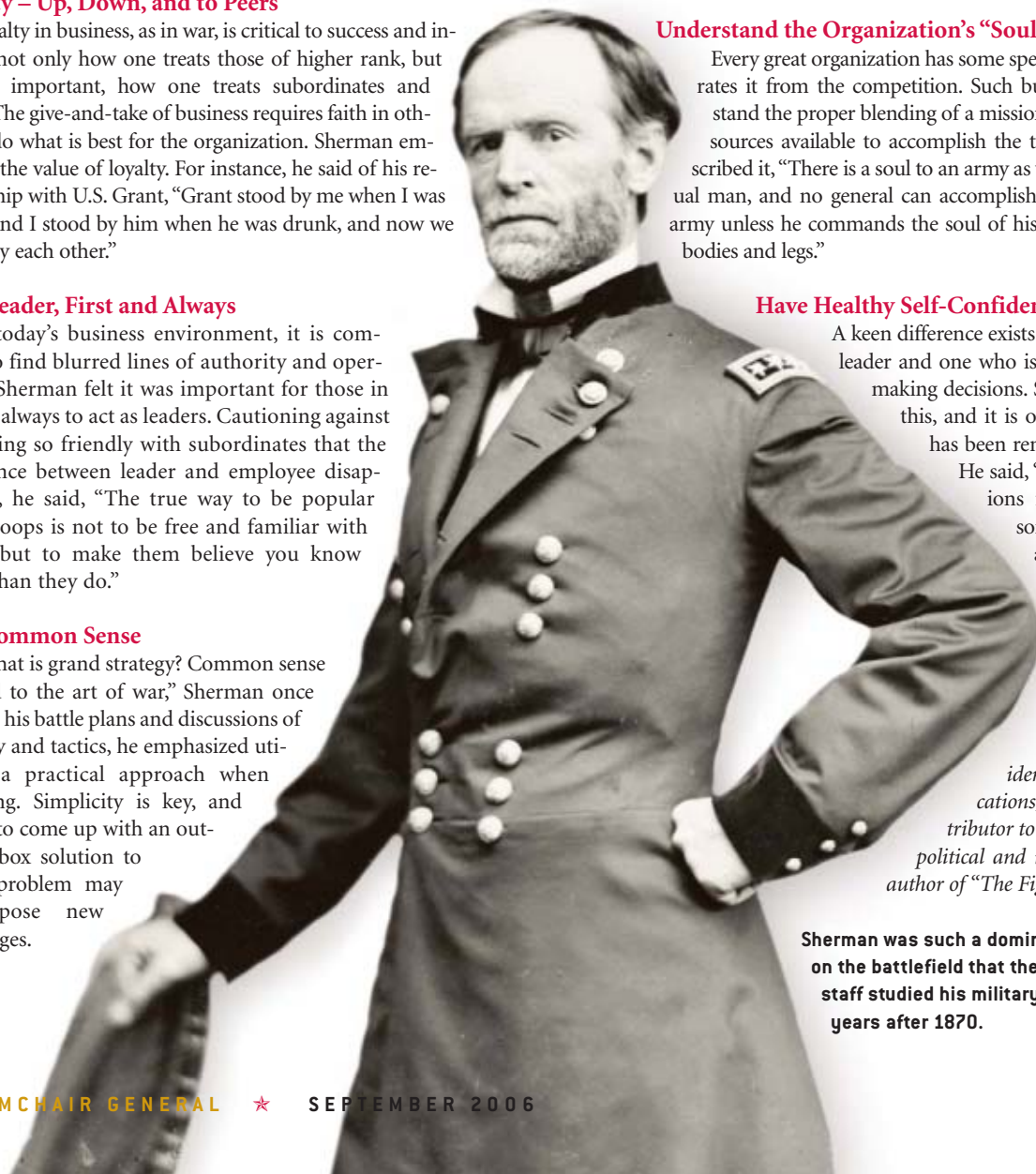
A keen difference exists between an arrogant leader and one who is self-confident when making decisions. Sherman understood this, and it is one of the reasons he has been remembered in history.

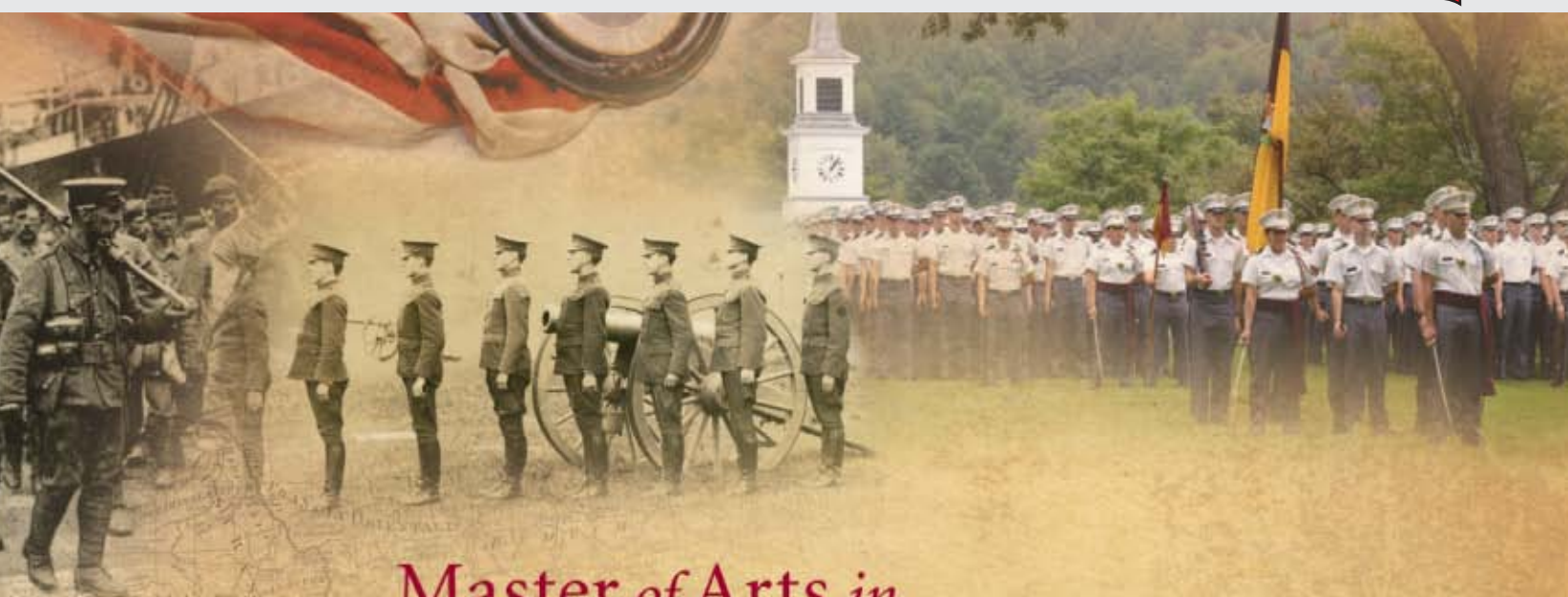
He said, "I make up my opinions from facts and reasoning, and not to suit anybody but myself."

If people don't like my opinions, it makes little difference as I don't solicit their opinions or votes." ★

Brian Sobel, president of Sobel Communications, is a frequent contributor to magazines, an on-air political and military analyst, and author of "The Fighting Pattons."

Sherman was such a dominating personality on the battlefield that the Prussian general staff studied his military campaigns in the years after 1870.





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HOW THEY FOUGHT

History's Most Disastrous RETREAT

**Napoleon's failed Russian campaign,
winter, 1812.**

Sergeant. ... Sergeant! Please, let me rest for a bit. I can't feel my feet and my frozen fingers keep losing their grip on your overcoat. We've been marching for ages and I'm so tired. I just need a few moments to regain my strength, and surely you need a rest from carrying me.

Oh, thank you, Sergeant. I promise not to fall asleep – I've seen the wolf-gnawed corpses of those who do. They mark our route all the way back to Moscow.

Good Lord! Is that ridge behind us the one we left this morning? How can we have struggled so much but only covered a few kilometers?

Listen! Is that firing behind us? This horrible wind makes it difficult to hear. Do you think the Cossacks are coming again? They're magnificent horsemen – but like the wolves, they always strike the weak members of our column. If only my frozen fingers could operate a musket, I might help hold them off. But I can't even grasp a weapon, let alone fire it. Look at your own musket, Sergeant. The rag you have wrapped round your lock is frozen solid! Oh, this cold is just awful!

Please stay with me and let's rest a bit longer. Listen, I'll tell you a secret. I was very scared at our big battle at Borodino. I've never seen such crowds. People came with us from all over the empire to help teach those Russians a les-

DATE: December 14, 1812
PLACE: Vilna, west of Moscow
UNIT: 1st Regiment de Ligne,
Napoleon's Grande Armée





**I promise not to fall asleep –
I've seen the wolf-gnawed
corpses of those who do.**

As the soldiers stop for a brief rest, they keep a close eye out for ambushes. In addition to dealing with the freezing weather, the emperor's army had to fight off hit-and-run attacks by fierce Cossacks, Russia's marauding cavalry.

HOW THEY FOUGHT

son! I saw Austrians, Portuguese, Prussians, Hessians, Poles, Swiss, Dutch and Italians, all with their magnificent, colorful uniforms. And all those flags – it was breathtaking! But the fighting terrified me. I'll never forget the noise of the cannon, the constant rattle of the musket volleys, and the smell of smoke. It was both wonderful and horrible at the same time.

It seemed like we won the battle at Borodino, but I don't understand why the Russians didn't surrender. I was very proud of our regiment as I watched the ranks of our men advance bravely against the Russians. And to think it was *my* drumbeats that sent them forward! Do you think I did a good job beating out the signals and orders for the men? Are you angry that I've lost my drum? I just couldn't hold it anymore – but look, I still have my drumsticks!

Thank you for laying me close to the fire; its warmth is comforting. Strangely though, my feet and fingers hurt now more than ever. Are your toes turning as black as mine, Sergeant?

I don't want to go on any more campaigns if they finish like this. Don't misunderstand me; it's been exciting to serve with you and our regiment as we followed the emperor into Russia, and I've seen many wonderful sights. But I'm so cold! And I miss my mother and want to see her again.

Look here! Before the big fires started in Moscow, I took this piece of silk ribbon from one of the Russian homes as a souvenir for Mother to place in her hair. She'll be very pleased and proud of me when I return. You'll meet her, Sergeant, and I'll be sure to tell her how you've looked after me like a father.

I'm sorry, but I just can't keep my eyes open any longer. Would it be all right if I slept for just a bit? Not long, only a few minutes and then I'm certain I'll be able to carry on again.

Wait! Do you hear the hoofbeats and that awful "Urrah!" shout? The Cossacks are coming! ★

Steve West, a military historian, has written extensively on military subjects in the United States and the United Kingdom.

"ACG" thanks the members of the Hogan Group of Bangor, Wales, for their indispensable help with this article.



ABOVE: The soldiers gather around a fire for warmth. However, since many have severe frostbite, the heat only adds to their pain.

RIGHT: The sergeant struggles forward with the regimental drummer on his back. The job of a drummer boy was to beat step, which was critical to keeping unit formation. Battle-hardened soldiers often treated drummer boys as if they were their own children.

FAR RIGHT: Frostbite and fear begin to set in. Of the 450,000 soldiers to invade Russia in June, only 20,000 would return.



Like the wolves, the Cossacks always strike the weak members of our column.



Unable to keep his eyes open, the drummer boy starts to doze off. Cold, lack of nutrition, and exhaustion ravaged Napoleon's soldiers during their retreat.



TIPPING POINTS

The Terrible Trinity of World War I

How machine guns, artillery and fortifications changed war forever.

In the decades before World War I, two new weapons revolutionized warfare: the machine gun and indirect-firing artillery. When combined with extensive field fortifications (perfected during America's Civil War), this "terrible trinity" marked one of the most momentous tipping points in military history.

SANDBAGS, BARBED WIRE AND MAXIM GUNS

Until 1914, few military leaders fully comprehended that the shallow trenches and bulletproof parapets of the American Civil War had strengthened the defense to such a degree that nearly all frontal attacks were bound to fail. The problem was vastly intensified in World War I when machine guns and cannon were employed to protect field fortifications – extensive and elaborate trench systems and sandbagged bunkers positioned behind rows of barbed-wire obstacles. Each machine gun could duplicate the firepower of a thousand riflemen, and cannon could be emplaced far beyond the range of enemy small-arms fire.

American inventor Hiram Maxim perfected the machine gun in 1884. Although his native country largely ignored his so-called "Devil's Paintbrush," the European powers eagerly adopted it.

The most revolutionary developments in this terrible trinity, however, occurred in artillery.

KING OF BATTLE – AGAIN

Until 1897, "recoil" severely limited the effectiveness of field artillery pieces. The force of firing projectiles would thrust the weapons violently backward, and gunners had to push them back into position. Rates of fire therefore were very low. That year, however, the famous "French 75" appeared,

rendering all other artillery obsolete overnight. This 75 mm field gun featured a hydraulic-oil, compressed-air mechanism to absorb the recoil. Only the cannon barrel moved rearward upon firing, after which the mechanism returned the barrel to its original position. Since the gun's carriage remained in place, gunners were able to fire at the unheard of rate of 20 rounds per minute.

Nevertheless, because all artillery action was "direct fire" – the gun and its target were in sight of each other – field artillery remained vulnerable to fire from enemy riflemen. Military leaders faced a crisis in the Boer War (1899-1902) when Boers, employing the groundbreaking German Mauser 98 magazine rifle, shot to pieces the British artillery deployed in the open alongside the infantry. The Mauser 98 fired high-velocity bullets at ranges of up to 1,200 yards. Therefore, to survive, artillery had to find a way to conceal itself. Greatly in-

creasing the range and the invention of the telephone made that possible.

device, a forward observer accompanying the front-line infantry could send precise firing directions to artillery positioned far to the rear, safely out of rifle range. The process relied on ordinary trigonometry combined with the newly developed goniometric or panoramic sight mounted on each cannon. This sight permitted the guns to be aligned on a known base point. A battery of artillery, hidden thousands of yards from the enemy, could fire "indirectly" by calculating the range and direction to its targets. After the initial rounds were fired, the forward observer telephoned "corrections" to battery plotters who, using the base point as a reference, translated the corrections into firing data. The artillery gun barrels were then adjusted up, down, left or right so that the projectiles would strike the intended targets.

With forward observers acting as its remote eyes on the battlefield, artillery could now fire indirectly at any enemy target within its range. Indirect fire revolutionized artillery and positioned it once again as the unchallenged "King of Battle."

Both the indirect firing system and the modern machine gun were introduced during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). By the time the war in Europe commenced in 1914, indirect fire had become established practice. The terrible trinity of artillery, machine guns and fortifications created a bloody stalemate on the Western Front. Only Germany's exhaustion in 1918 – and America's entry into the war – finally broke the battlefield impasse. ★

Bevin Alexander, formerly a commander of the Army 5th Historical Detachment, Korea 1951-1952, is the author of nine books on military history. He is currently an adjunct professor of history at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia.



ABOVE: July 1, 1916. British heavy artillery pieces fire in support of the attack on German positions near the Somme, France.

creasing range and the invention of the telephone made that possible.

By 1910, the maximum effective range of rifled artillery had steadily increased to 6,000 yards – five times the range of infantry rifles. Improved fuses and powerful new smokeless-powder explosives were responsible for this increase. Development of these explosives had begun in Sweden in 1866 with Alfred Nobel's invention of dynamite.

Yet the field telephone made indirect firing of artillery feasible. When using this

The most revolutionary developments in this terrible trinity occurred in artillery.

The King Roars! Members of a German gun crew cover their ears as this huge artillery piece sends an enormous projectile on its way toward an unseen target many miles away. Indirect fire techniques, improved cannon design, and modern explosives made artillery King of Battle in World War I.

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44



**You
Command
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50



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Story**
54



**What
Next
General?**
62

INTERACTIVE



COMBAT!

The PzKw VI "Tiger II" tank was a dreaded enemy of the Red Army. Its 180 mm frontal armor and 88 mm main gun were superior to those of the Soviet T-34 tank, making the Tiger particularly effective in the defense.

TIGER TRAP!
HUNGARY, 1945

NEXT PAGE

ACG INTERACTIVE COMBAT!

Choose the correct course of action as your German Tiger tank takes on 10 Soviet T-34s in Hungary, 1945.

You are Oberfeldwebel Rudolf Stadler, commander of a PzKw VI “Tiger II” tank. This 70-ton monster has the thickest armor and best main gun (the dreaded 88 mm) of any tank in use at this stage of World War II. The only hope an enemy has of defeating your Tiger is to maneuver for a flank or rear shot. However, you do not intend to allow such an opportunity.

Your unit, the 503d Special Heavy Tank Battalion, is part of the German Sixth SS Panzer Army recently transferred to Hungary from heavy combat in the Ardennes. Although the Ardennes Offensive – called the Battle of the Bulge by your enemies – did not achieve the hoped-for breakthrough, it took the Amis (Americans) and Tommies (British)

completely by surprise and slowed their impending assault on Germany. Now, your unit has been moved to counter a new menace from the east – the surging Red Army.

Since the 1943 defeats at Stalingrad and Kursk, the Ivans (Russians) have rolled steadily westward. Here, near Hungary’s Gran River, your Tiger II and supporting infantry platoon are about to meet Stalin’s vanguard. Armed with rifles, panzerfausts and two MG-42 machine guns, your infantrymen occupy a trench just behind a large anti-tank ditch. Your Tiger is parked in a village close to

Muzla Road and is camouflaged from the prowling Red Air Force’s deadly IL-2 Sturmovik fighter-bombers. However, when the Russians arrive, you must move to a fighting position to mount a proper defense.

As you savor a Lucky Strike “liberated” from a GI captured in the Ardennes, the field telephone to Hill 65’s observation post rings.

“Ivans!” the infantry observer reports. “Ten T-34s are approaching from the east along Muzla Road. They’ll reach the village in 10 minutes.”

Now you know *when* you’ll meet the enemy, but exactly *where* should you position your Tiger to defend against 10-to-1 odds?

DATE/TIME:

5:25 p.m., February 20, 1945

LOCATION:

Near Muzla, Hungary

MISSION:

Defend against a Red Army tank attack

UNIT:

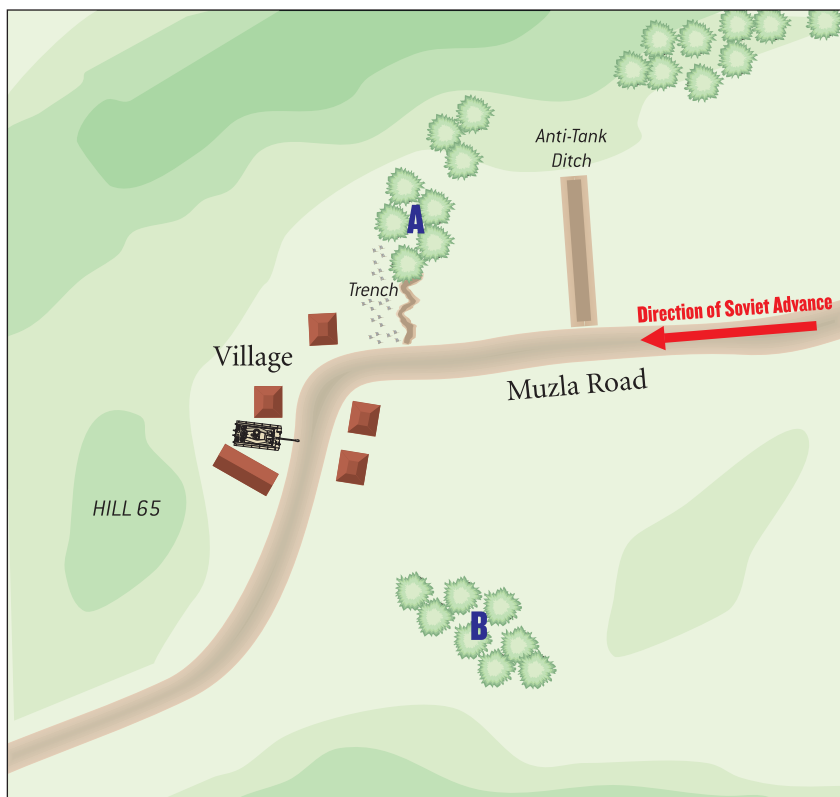
Oberfeldwebel Stadler’s Tiger II tank and a supporting infantry platoon

ENEMY:

10 Soviet T-34/85 tanks

What is Your Decision, Oberfeldwebel Stadler?

Turn the page and listen in as Stadler briefs his crew on the correct course of action.

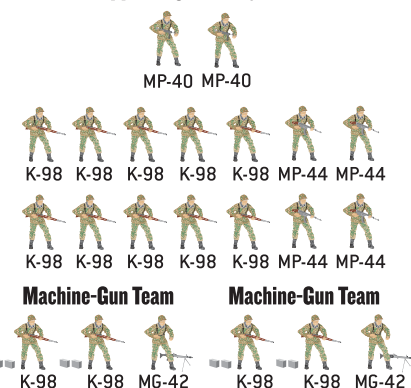


Muzla - Batorove Kosihy Road, 1945



0 25 50 75 100 yards
0 25 50 75 100 meters

Supporting Infantry Platoon



Tiger II

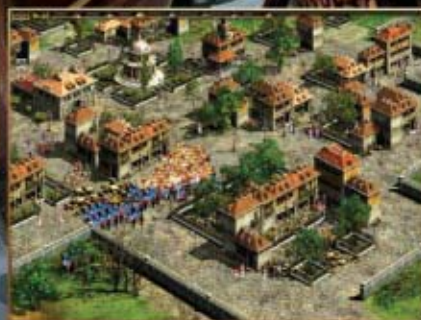
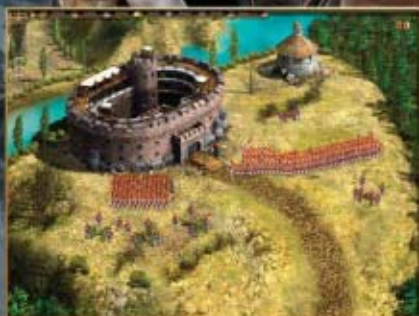
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— GameSpy

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— IGN

"Another technically marvelous wargame that will enthrall click-addicted-twitch-gamers and gronards alike."

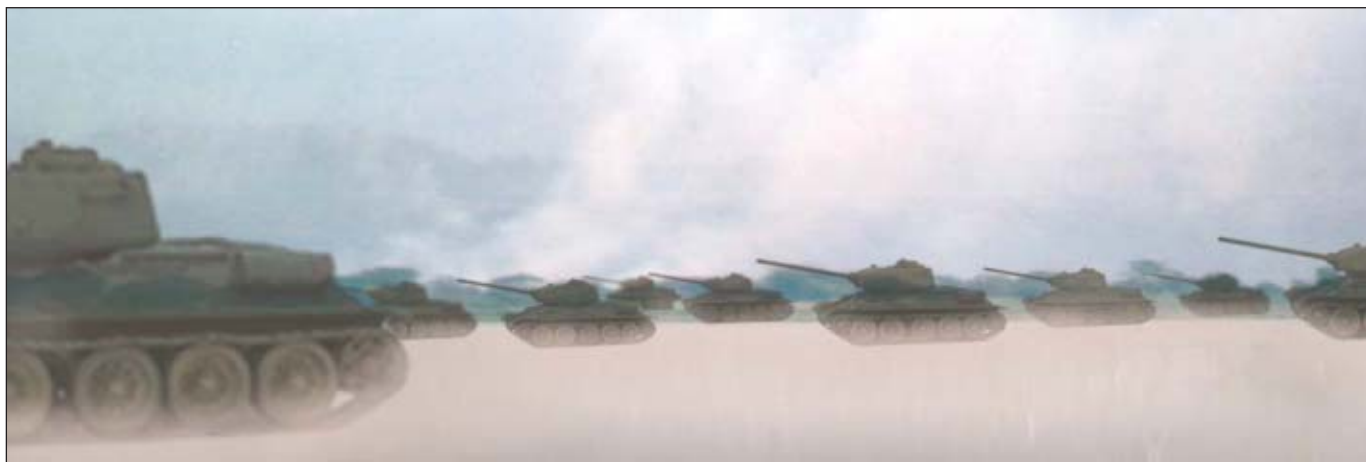
— WorthPlaying



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ACG **INTERACTIVE** **COMBAT!**



CHRIS GOSSETT

Ten Russian T-34 tanks rumble toward the Hungarian village and straight into a German Tiger II tank with supporting infantry.

TANK COMMANDER'S ASSESSMENT OF THE TACTICAL SITUATION

Although you have supreme confidence in the tactical ability of your tank, 10-to-1 odds are the greatest you've ever faced. However, the combat-seasoned veterans in your infantry platoon will steady the new recruits, and the trench should protect them from any artillery or mortar fire that might support the Russian attack. Your platoon's excellent MG-42 machine guns will wreak havoc amongst the enemy "tank riders," and the bazooka-like panzerfausts will effectively deal with any T-34s that present a vulnerable flank as they attempt to maneuver around the anti-tank ditch.

Your immediate question, however, is where to position your Tiger II.

POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

Two locations present the most obvious fighting positions: Position A, northeast of the village, behind the anti-tank ditch and at the north end of the infantry trench; and Position B, at the edge of a wood line just south of the village.

Position A places your tank in close proximity to your infantry support, but it offers few opportunities for long-range shots up Muzla Road. Therefore, you would have to engage most of the T-34s at close range. And while the anti-tank ditch provides protection against a head-on attack, it is clearly visible

and the Russians will likely avoid it during a close-in tactical fight.

Position B takes advantage of your Tiger's 88 mm gun, which has a greater "stand off" capability – the ability to fire effectively at long ranges – than the T-34s' in-



CHRIS GOSSETT

You have only a few minutes to make what is likely a life-or-death decision.

ferior 85 mm guns. On the other hand, it also separates your tank from the close-in support of the infantry platoon. If any T-34s get close enough to flank the Tiger, your infantry won't be able to cover the tank's vulnerable sides and rear.

You have only a few minutes to make what is likely a life-or-death decision.

TANK COMMANDER'S BRIEFING

Dropping down through your tank commander's cupola, you ask for your crew's attention. "Listen up. The observer reports 10 of Ivan's T-34s coming our way. That's too damned many to handle if we let them get too close before we start picking them off. Therefore, we're displacing to Position B near the edge of the wood line about 120 meters south of the village. From there we can engage the enemy tanks at the greatest possible distance as they approach along the road.

"While this location separates us from our infantry, having them in a strong position on the northeast side of the village extends our defensive frontage considerably and lessens the chance that the Russians will maneuver around our flanks. The Tiger's long-range fire will give away our position, but any T-34s that survive that gauntlet will face the dilemma of either attacking us head-on or taking on our dug-in infantry.

"All right, let's get moving!" ★

Colonel (Ret) John Antal is the author of several books, including "Proud Legions."

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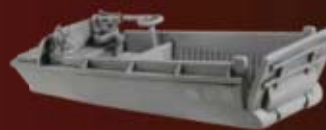
Defiant Paratroopers



Lockheed P-38G Lightning



Tank Obstacle



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ACG INTERACTIVE YOU COMMAND

1066 Hastings,

Test your combat decision-making skills as you lead the invading Norman army at the battle that decided England's fate.

William, Duke of Normandy, was sometimes known as “the bastard” because of his mixed ancestry – yet no man dared test his fighting skill by calling him that to his face. His doubtful parentage, however, did not prevent him from becoming, arguably, France’s most powerful duke. When Normandy proved too small a territory to contain William’s grand ambition, he set his sights on a much greater conquest – England. The English throne had lain

vacant after the untimely death in January 1066 of the childless king, Edward the Confessor. William based a claim to the crown on his lineage (through the bloodline of a cousin) and on Edward’s alleged promise to him in 1051 that it would be his upon Edward’s death.

While William’s claim was not without merit, he was not alone in his quest to become king of England. In fact, Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex, wore the crown – with the backing of the English high council – even as William schemed to acquire it. Moreover, Harold had assembled an Anglo-Danish army to enforce his assumption of the throne. William, however, was not dissuaded – he intended to fight for his right to become king.

Armchair General® now takes you back to this October 1066 battle in which you will play the role of William, Duke of Normandy. You have at your command 7,500 men: 2,000 mounted knights, 4,000 infantrymen and 1,500 archers. In addition, 2,000 support personnel and retainers are attached to your army. The majority of your men are Norman, but Breton and Flemish liegemen augment your formidable military power.

Your force recently completed the largest amphibious operation in anyone’s memory. Sailing from the Norman shores aboard 650 ships, your men – along with their warhorses – crossed the English Channel and landed safely on the south coast of England on September 28. The next day, you moved them to Hastings and directed your pioneers to construct a motte and bailey castle to serve as your base of operations. (See map, page 45.)

From intelligence sources, you learned that only days ago Harold fought a major

You are in Command!

Armchair General® challenges YOU to take command of this historical battle. Here’s how to get in on the action:

READ the article carefully

DEVELOP your own solution to this tactical dilemma

RECORD your solution on the pullout form between pages 48 and 49

SEND to *Armchair General* by August 25, 2006

Winning Reader Solutions will be printed in the January 2007 issue.

battle at Stamford Bridge in the north of England where he defeated yet another claimant to the English throne, Harald Hardrada, King of Norway. Harold is aware of your bid for the crown, and upon learning of your landing he began marching south at the head of an army believed to be 8,000 to 10,000 strong.

You immediately dispatched mounted reconnaissance detachments to search for your enemy. Some of the scouts have just returned with urgent news: Harold’s force is close by and is approaching rapidly.

Tomorrow you will fight for the throne of England.

SECRET WEAPON

As a highly skilled knight, you have witnessed the horror of medieval war during your military campaigns in Normandy. The edged weapons, spears and arrows used by most combatants seldom produce a “clean

When Normandy proved too small a territory to contain William's grand ambition, he set his sights on a much greater conquest – England.

kill,” and the battlefields of 11th-century Europe more closely resemble slaughterhouses than scenes of noble combat. Men are rarely killed with a single blow; rather, they are literally hacked to pieces or sliced and punctured so severely that they later bleed to death. Hence, powerfully muscled arms – and strong stomachs – are the main prerequisites for men-at-arms' success in battle. Your invading army is composed of a great number of such men, but you also possess a secret advantage that your enemy does not.

The new weapon you will unleash in the coming battle is the mounted knight. Although men have fought on horseback since before the days of Alexander the Great, their lethality has been limited until recently. Perched precariously atop a bounding warhorse and held in place only by knee pressure and leg strength, the mounted warrior has historically lacked the technological means to anchor himself firmly onto his mount. Therefore, his tactical advantages have been limited to the strength of his arms, his height above the enemy, and



ANDREW SUMMERSGILL

HAROLD'S ARMY: Ten ranks deep, the English battle line stretched 800 yards along the crest of Caldbec Hill (in the background where buildings stand today). Viewed from William's perspective, the slope would have appeared deceptively gentle. However, it was sufficiently steep to retard the full impact of a Norman mounted charge.

the mobility provided by his horse.

Now, however, the simple but effective *stirrup* permits the mounted warrior to harness the full power of his 1,000-pound warhorse to help deliver the maximum amount of shock against enemy infantry. Borrowed from the nomads of the steppes of Asia, the device provides the means for knight and warhorse to combine their power and fight as a single deadly and potent “weapons system.”

Protected by large, teardrop-shaped shields, conical helmets with nose guards, and long coats of chain mail, your mounted knights are armed chiefly with sturdy lances, but they also carry traditional long swords similar to those of their Norse Viking ancestors. Charging knee to knee on thundering warhorses, the knights deliver a combined blow of mass and shock capable of breaking through heavily packed ranks of infantry and scattering opposing cavalry formations.

DANGEROUS FOE

The Anglo-Danish army is composed of highly trained and battle-hardened men – very dangerous foes, indeed. In contrast to your mounted Normans,



ANDREW SUMMERSGILL

Constructed as a memorial to the Battle of Hastings, Battle Abbey is today a hollow ruin.

however, the vanguard of the enemy force is proficient in a different method of warfare, a legacy of its long association with Scandinavian forms of war. Though they ride to battle and are capable horsemen in the hunt, the Anglo-Danish elite – the thanes and housecarls – eschew mounted combat, preferring instead to fight on foot. Their well-organized and cohesive infantry formations provide them with an excellent defensive posture as they lock heavy wooden shields along a unified front – their famous “shield wall.” This dense arrangement allows for positive command and control on the battlefield, as voice commands can be more easily heard and relayed to all within the unit.

While the English thanes favor the use of swords, the housecarls' weapon of choice is the fearsome battle-ax. Also descended from the Vikings, the battle-ax can cleave an enemy's helmet in a single blow and can inflict grievous blunt-force trauma through an opponent's coat of mail.

The remainder of Harold's army consists



PETHO CARTOGRAPHY

England's new king, Harold, exercises only a tenuous hold over factious, quarreling earls just across the English Channel. The throne of England seems ripe for the plucking!

ACG INTERACTIVE YOU COMMAND



Norman knights brave a hail of arrows to attack Harold's formidable battle line.

of the fyrd, a general levy of men composed mostly of peasant farmers unskilled in war – clearly not the equals of the housecarls and thanes in battle. The members of the fyrd are armed with a motley array of weapons – spears, swords and even farm implements – and if they wear protective armor at all, it varies from padded leather tunics to odd bits and pieces of chain mail.

Typically positioned behind the shield wall for protection, groups of archers support the thanes, housecarls and the fyrd. When necessary, archers can act as ad hoc infantrymen to make up for losses in the fighting line.

As foot soldiers, your enemies have a keen eye for terrain and will certainly capitalize on every advantage offered by the gently rolling fields here in southern England. You expect Harold to select a defensive position on high ground from which his army, standing grimly behind its shield wall, will be difficult to dislodge and overpower.

TO THE FIELD OF BATTLE

On the afternoon of October 13, your scouts report that Harold and his army are now only seven miles away and marching in your direction. You immediately place your encampment on full alert and call in the foraging parties, thus forestalling any surprise night attack your opponent might have in mind. Harold is crafty and experienced, and you will give him no opportuni-

ty to steal an easy victory. Far from home and with the Channel at your back, a defeat would spell disaster.

Early the next morning, you lead your army out to meet the enemy. After riding a short distance, you discover that Harold has positioned his men across the main road to London, spreading them out in battle order atop a rise that forms part of Caldbec Hill. (See Pullout Map between pages 48 and 49.) Although the elevation is not very high, his shield wall stands in a strong defensive position and he has excellent visibility of the surrounding area – ground over which you must approach and on which you will fight. Thick woods protect his right and left flanks. Moreover, the terrain there is swampy and steeply sloped, making any flank attack difficult. Hence, Harold has wisely chosen a position that will canalize the battle into a narrow area to his front.

The enemy force is arrayed in its characteristic battle line and is 10 ranks deep. In the center of the formation, fluttering above the wooden shield wall, you see Harold's personal pennants, the Red Dragon of Wessex and the royal standard of the Fighting Man. You estimate his force of housecarls, thanes and the fyrd to be about 8,000 men. From your position at the bottom of the hill, you can discern very few archers behind the enemy's infantry line.

Your have divided your 7,500 men into

FACING PAGE: This mirror from medieval France shows Anglo-Saxon King Harold squaring off with William, Duke of Normandy. Harold assumed the throne following the death of King Edward the Confessor in January of 1066. This prompted William to invade England.

three distinct units and have positioned them in-line. Your archers are to the front, followed by infantrymen and then mounted knights composed of Bretons, Normans and the Franco-Flemish contingent.

Impatient to seize the initiative, at approximately 9 a.m. you decide to launch an immediate attack. If Harold has not yet gathered all his forces, you believe a vigorous assault might dislodge his army, despite its strong position.

Your archers advance, firing several volleys of arrows. However, due to the slope of the hill, many of the men miscalculate the range and the enemy suffers little harm. Undaunted, you order your infantry forward. The soldiers trudge up the incline and smash against Harold's shield wall in an attempt to force a breach that your mounted knights can exploit. Still, the enemy line holds firm.

Although you realize that your mounted warriors will have a difficult time bringing the full power of their charge to bear when moving uphill, you order them to advance in support of the infantry. Unable to gain momentum on the slope, they merely ride up to the shield wall where they are met by a barrage of arrows, spears, axes and even thrown stones. Though the English suffer some casualties, your knights make no headway.

The exertion of the uphill attack takes its toll on your men, and around midday the Bretons are pushed back. Soon thereafter, your center starts to collapse and then even your sturdy Normans begin to retreat. Suddenly, you hear the cry, "The duke is dead! William has been killed. We are all lost." Panic swiftly spreads through your ranks.

To quell the growing danger, you stand in your stirrups and tip your helmet back to show your familiar face to your men. As you gallop up and down the line, you shout, "It is I, your liege lord, William! This day has not seen me done; look well, I am alive and still in this fight!"

A cheer breaks out as your men realize that you are unharmed. Yet it is clear that



Osmodum vero Idem.

Guillemus dux. in die natalis domini ab Arlando

ACG INTERACTIVE YOU COMMAND

your attack has failed and that your army has been pushed back down the slope by a combination of exhaustion, fear, and the threat of a massed English counterattack.

By early afternoon, both sides pause to recover from the clash of arms. You assess the situation as your force regroups. Your men and horses are tired but far from beaten. After a bit of rest, water and food, they'll be ready to resume the fight.

Harold has suffered some losses, too; among them his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine, who were struck down while holding the flanks. However, your enemy still maintains a strong position and late-arriving troops trickle into his battle line. Furthermore, your spies report rumors that Harold's fleet is preparing to blockade Hastings. If you are not triumphant by nightfall, you will be forced to retreat – which to your men will be a clear signal of defeat.

You have only a few hours of daylight left during which to secure a clear victory. You assemble your main battle leaders, William Fitz Osbern and Count Eustace of Boulogne of the Franco-Flemish contingent, and Alan Fregant of the Bretons. It is time for a council of war.

Addressing your commanders, you begin, "Liegemen, the situation is serious, but the battle may yet be won. I wish to discuss with you three strategies to receive your wise counsel on each of them."

**COURSE OF ACTION ONE:
HAMMER AND ANVIL**

As your battle leaders look to you, you explain your first plan. "Like the blacksmith who strikes his hammer against the anvil, we will strike our English opponents with all our mounted knights from our right to pin them against the anvil of our massed infantry and archers on our left. In this way, the enemy is forced to yield or be crushed."

"Yes," Count Eustace interjects, "massing the full strength of our mounted knights on only a portion of the enemy line will compel Harold to reinforce that sector with men from other parts of his line, thereby weakening his defense that opposes our infantry and archers. Under such conditions, he cannot remain strong everywhere."

"True, my lord," responds Fregant. "But I worry that our knights' attack may not be powerful enough to accomplish this purpose. They must still storm uphill, and there-

fore the power of their charge will be dissipated. If the assault is too weak, Harold may not be forced to move men from the other sectors to defeat it."

"I thank both of you for your counsel," you reply, "but hear my other strategies."

**COURSE OF ACTION TWO:
FEIGN RETREAT**

"Like deceitful traders at a midsummer's fair offering seemingly splendid goods only to switch them for worthless trinkets, we can deceive our enemy. To trick Harold in this manner, we shall offer him what appears to be an irresistible prize – the sight of our army in panicked retreat!"

Your commanders look at you in astonishment and exclaim, "My lord! Surely not!"

"But it is only a clever ruse," you explain, "designed to trick our overconfident foe into abandoning his strong position. To carry out this scheme, we will form for attack as we did this morning, advancing against Harold's shield wall in the same manner – archers first, and then the infantry followed in turn by our knights. Since a similar attack failed earlier, Harold will become overconfident when, on my signal, we feign a mass panic and begin to retreat."

"Aha, I see your plan!" Fitz Osbern blurts out excitedly. "The enemy, seeing us in flight, will think us done for and will follow en masse close on our heels to finish us off. Once they are on more level ground, we wheel about and crush them."

"Just so," you reply. "Exactly as we did at Arques in 1052."

"My lord," Fregant says, "such a strategy will give our mounted knights excellent ground over which to deliver their charge. Yet I fear that once our men begin to retreat, they may prove hard to stop. Is it not dangerous to set them to flight?"

"Do not underestimate our army," you respond. "Our men are made of sterner stuff and I have never regretted trusting their discipline in combat. Yet hear my final plan."

**COURSE OF ACTION THREE:
ATTACK FROM THE REAR**

"Harold's shield wall has proved hard to break by frontal attack. However, he may trust too much that the woods and broken terrain on his flanks and rear are impenetrable to our army. Therefore, we shall press the

enemy line in front with half of our infantry and all of our knights, attacking with just enough force to keep the enemy in position. Meanwhile, the other half of the infantry and all of the archers will retire to the south, as if abandoning the field. Once out of sight, they will turn back and move unseen through the dense woods around the English army's flanks to maneuver behind it and attack it from the rear. The whistling of our archers' arrows and the shouts of our attacking infantry shall be the signal for the holding force to attack in earnest. Caught between two forces, Harold's army will be surrounded and crushed."

With a concerned look, Count Eustace counters, "But my lord, we have not properly scouted the ground over which the rear-attack force must traverse. Swamps and bogs may fatally delay our infantry and archers. Moreover, Harold's army already outnumbered our own. Do you think it wise to split our forces in such a manner?"

You do not reply to Eustace's question. Rather, you dismiss the commanders for the time being by saying, "Thank you for your wise counsel. I will take all of your comments to heart and give you my final decision anon."

As your leaders take their leave, you reflect on the three courses of action. You worry that perhaps there are others you've yet to consider. However, you have but a short time to make a decision.

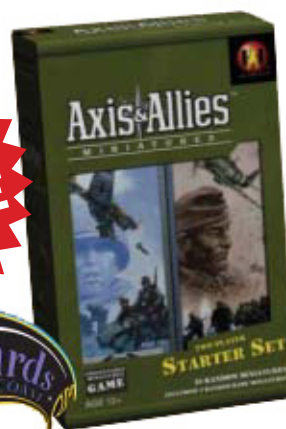
Duke William, what are your orders? ★

Andrew H. Hershey, PhD, contributes regularly to the TDG section of the "USMC Gazette" and is a three-time winner of its TDG design contests. He is also a designer of World War II tactical-level wargames for Heat of Battle Games.

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**Combat Decision Game
(CDG) #16**

HASTINGS, 1066

Reader Solution



- ☐ **COA 1: HAMMER AND ANVIL**
Attack with massed knights on the right to pin the English against Norman archers and infantry holding the left
- ☐ **COA 2: FEIGN RETREAT**
Withdraw the Normans to lure the enemy forward, and then turn and counterattack
- ☐ **COA 3: ATTACK FROM THE REAR**
Knights and half the infantry hold the enemy while the rest of the infantry and the archers attack from the rear
- ☐ **OTHER COA**
You have an alternative course of action in mind

Commander, you have various options to consider for this mission. Check the box next to the Course of Action you choose and draw your solution on the map. On the reverse, explain your solution in the space provided (200 words max).

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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ACG INTERACTIVE YOU COMMAND SOLUTION

Chinese Farm, 1973

Historical outcome and winning Reader Solutions
to CDG #14, May 2006 issue.

The May 2006 issue of *Armchair General*® presented readers with the Combat Decision Game “Chinese Farm, 1973.” This CDG placed you in the role of Major General Avraham “Bren” Adan, commander of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) 162d Armored Division during the Yom Kippur War, October 1973. Adan’s mission was to defeat a counterattack by the Egyptian 25th Armored Brigade that threatened to break through to the strategically significant position of the Chinese Farm. With strong Egyptian forces lurking to the north, a successful attack by the 25th Brigade from the south could trap Israeli units around the Chinese Farm and isolate the IDF’s precarious bridgehead across the Suez Canal. Therefore, Adan had to crush the

Egyptian advance or put the entire IDF Southern Command at risk.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME

The pace at which modern mechanized warfare proceeds is one of its most distinctive – and constraining – features. Commanders have precious little time to weigh the pros and cons of competing courses of action. They must remain constantly attuned to the ebb and flow of battle and be prepared to make informed decisions and issue vital orders when the critical moment arrives. “You snooze, you lose” is more than just catchy slang for the Latin motto *carpe diem* (seize the day). It refers to the absolute necessity for modern commanders to keep their fingers on the pulse of the unfolding action and to be ready to make the correct decision quickly.

The process of recognizing a decisive event during a battle, analyzing its implications, considering viable courses of action, deciding on the best plan, and then transmitting decisions as orders to subordinate units is called the “command cycle.” The goal of every commander during a battle is to get inside his opponent’s command cycle – i.e., perceive, consider, decide, and act faster than the enemy. Adan’s actions to defeat the Egyptian 25th Armored Brigade’s attack are a textbook example.

Adan was able to analyze the developing situation and quickly throw the weight of his 162d Armored Division against

the Egyptian 25th Brigade at the crucial moment because he was operating inside his opponent’s command cycle and could react faster than his enemy. Indeed, even at higher command echelons in the Sinai, the IDF Southern Command was able to defeat Egyptian initiatives by responding to them more quickly than the enemy’s senior leadership.

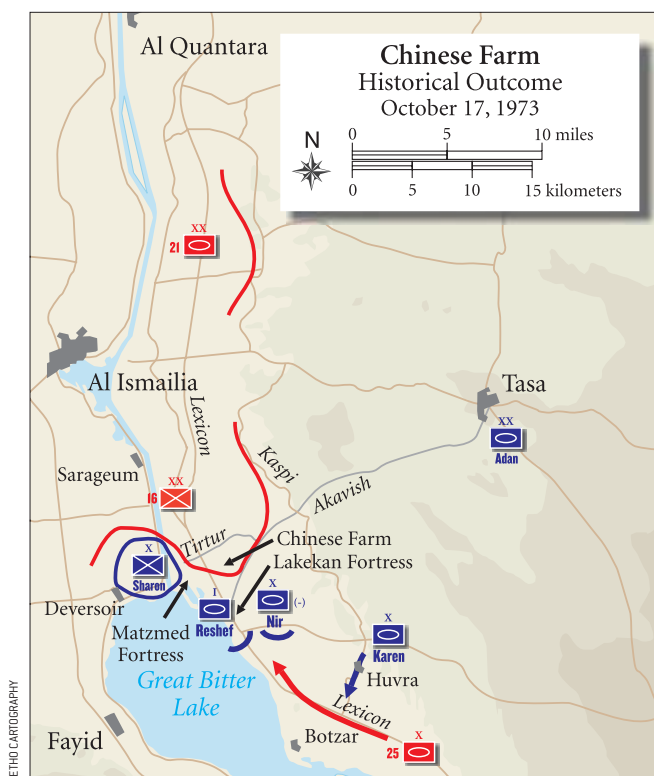
For instance, to mount the large-scale operation to the north of Adan’s position – the intent of which was to throw two Egyptian armies in a coordinated effort against the Israelis – Egyptian commanders required an operations order with the signatures of *four* different staff officers, representing the approvals of multiple levels of authority. This unnecessarily complicated and time-wasting administrative requirement allowed the Israelis ample time to counter enemy moves.

Adan dealt with the rapidly developing Egyptian threat by employing what he called a “jump-off division ambush.” Thus, in the historical battle, his actions coincided with Course of Action Two: Ambush. Adan’s term “jump-off ambush” referred to the extraordinary speed with which the operation was conceived and executed. In fact, time was such a decisive factor in this operation that several desired aspects of a “classic” ambush had to be abbreviated or even left out. (See *After Action Report: Key Points for an Ambush*, page 52.)

For example, the choice of an exact ambush site, the location of the “kill zone,” and the positioning of the ambush force for maximum impact was not determined ahead of time. Instead, each action depended on how far north along Lexicon Road the Egyptian 25th Brigade had progressed when Colonel Aryeh Karen’s brigade struck it. However, other critical aspects – gathering intelligence on the enemy via air reconnaissance, positioning of the blocking force and supporting brigade, and surprise and secrecy followed up by violent execution – were each hallmarks of Adan’s operation.

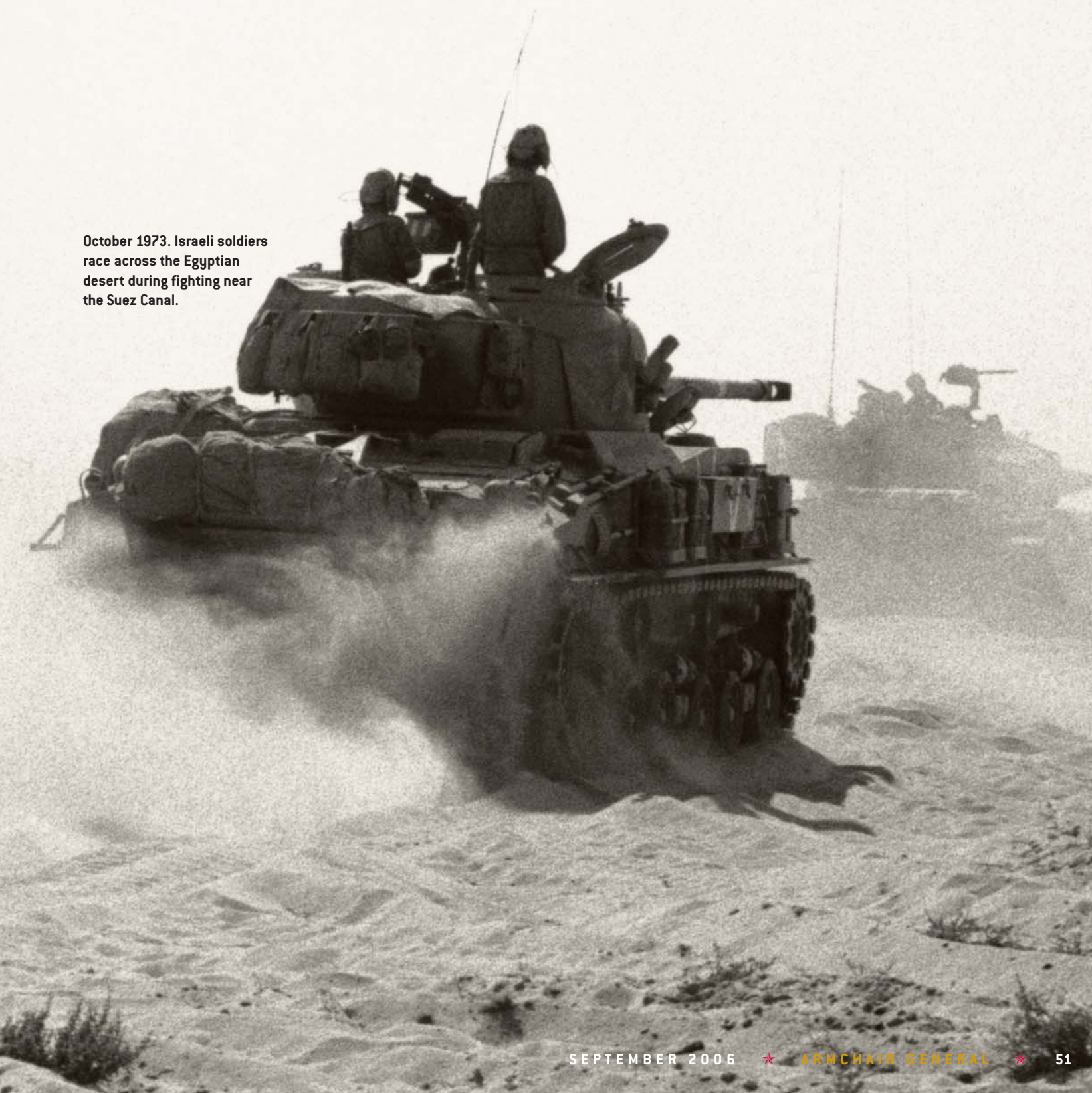
TANK SLAUGHTER

At 12:30 p.m. on October 17, 1973, Adan’s blocking force, consisting of the four-tank company from Sharon’s division under Colonel Amnon Reshef positioned south of Lakekan, opened fire on several enemy tanks scouting ahead on Lexicon Road. When the Egyptian main column began to arrive and



Adan's term "jump-off ambush" referred to the extraordinary speed with which the operation was conceived and executed.

October 1973. Israeli soldiers race across the Egyptian desert during fighting near the Suez Canal.



AFTER ACTION REPORT Key Points for an Ambush

- Gather maximum intelligence about the enemy
- Maintain secrecy; disguise/conceal unit movements
- Choose an ambush site that restricts enemy maneuver
- Create a "kill zone" with good fields of fire
- Place blocking forces to stop enemy advance or retreat
- Position ambush force to maximize firepower while avoiding friendly fire
- Time the ambush initiation to trap the main enemy force
- Capitalize on surprise and confusion; execute relentlessly
- Plan a disengagement that avoids friendly casualties

move against Reshef's small blocking force, it was rudely surprised when it ran straight into Nir's larger force (two tank battalions) of dug-in tanks, which opened fire. The Egyptians reacted by moving off the road. Some of them shifted west into the deadly minefield between Lexicon Road and the Great Bitter Lake, while the rest attempted to move northeast to attack Nir's tanks.

Meanwhile, Karen's brigade arrived farther south to complete the ambush by entering Lexicon Road from the east, not far from Botzer. His arrival cut off the Egyptian brigade, boxing it in between the Israeli forces and the lake. Deadly accurate Israeli tank fire and the effect of the minefield knocked out 86 Egyptian T-62s as well as all of the 25th Brigade's armored personnel carriers and support vehicles. The Israelis lost only four tanks, which were destroyed while chasing the Egyptians into the minefield.

Thanks to superior gunnery, imaginative leadership, and Adan's ability to work inside his opponent's command cycle, the 162d's hasty ambush not only defeated the enemy threat, it slaughtered the Egyptian force.

READER SOLUTIONS

If Adan had chosen Course of Action One: Defend, he would have given up a significant advantage by handing over the tactical initiative to the enemy. Although his tanks were in strong, hull-down positions and undoubtedly would have accounted for many enemy tank "kills," the Egyptian force nevertheless would have retained freedom of maneuver and the ability to bypass Israeli positions. Therefore, it would have remained a threat to Israeli units at the Chinese Farm and the still-tenuous Suez crossing operation.

Had Adan opted for Course of Action Three: Attack, he would have exposed himself to at least two possible negative outcomes. First, were his assault highly successful, Nir's brigade may have pushed the Egyptian brigade too far south along Lexicon Road to be trapped or heavily engaged by Karen's unit when it joined the fight (or the Egyptians may have gone into full retreat and escaped). Second, bringing Nir's brigade out of their dug-in positions to attack in the open down Lexicon Road – on what would have been es-

entially a one-tank front – would have given away an important advantage and would have risked defeat by superior numbers.

When selecting the winning Reader Solutions, our judges looked for those based on Course of Action Two: Ambush. Of the three options, it is the only one that fully utilizes the superior hull-down fighting ability of the Israeli tanks in Reshef's and Nir's units, provides a chance to trap and completely destroy the Egyptian brigade, and allows Adan to retain the tactical initiative.

Our judges were particularly impressed with the quality (and quantity!) of the responses to the Chinese Farm CDG – it generated the most Reader Solutions of any CDG yet. In fact, so many of them were excellently written and argued that in addition to selecting the winners and honorable mentions the judges singled out several more entries that they deemed "worthy of special recognition."

And now for excerpts from the winning Reader Solutions to "Chinese Farm, 1973" ...

John F. Klaine Sr., Kentucky, "This must be a quick response, as the enemy is moving quickly as well. ... Executed reasonably

[well], we will literally copy Hannibal's victory at Lake Trasimene."

James Reynolds, Missouri, "The defend option runs the risk of losing the initiative and possibly allowing the enemy to bypass. ... The attack option negates much of your qualitative advantage."

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Chuck Treese, Colorado, "Timing here is essential. ... Jeb Stuart and Fitzhugh Lee used a similar approach at Buckland Mills, Virginia, over a century before the Chinese Farm."

Thank you to everyone who participated in this CDG. Turn to page 44 and test your combat decision-making skills with CDG #16, "Hastings, 1066." This tactical battle places you in the role of William, Duke of Normandy, invading England with an army of archers, foot soldiers and mounted knights. The throne of England – and the course of history – hangs in the balance in one of the most important contests ever fought. Use the pullout form between pages 48 and 49 to explain your solution and mail, e-mail or fax it to *Armchair General* by August 25, 2006. Winners will be announced in the January 2007 issue. ★

Congratulations to our "Armchair Generals":

John F. Klaine, Ky.; James Reynolds, Mo.; Lt. Col. (Ret) Chuck Treese, Colo.
They beat out some tough competition!

HONORABLE MENTION

Paul Badali, Ontario, Canada
Chris Beres, N.J.
Maj. Gen. Louis D. Burkhalter, Iowa
Philip Campanaro, APO AE
Cadet Taylor W. Cox,
USMA West Point
Daniel de Roziere, Ind.
Trent Garner, Ark.
Donald K. Gilileo, Ariz.
Bryan Goldberg, Texas
Paul Grasso, Okla.
William Heim, Calif.

Robert Kreuzinger, Mont.
Nick LoCastro, N.J.
Maj. Michael C. McCall, U.S. Army
Lt. Col. [Ret] Whit McCoskrie, Mo.
Christopher H. Maciejko, N.Y.
Greg R. Martin, La.
Robert R. Morales II, Ga.
Nate Nimmer, Wis.
Michael Parrott, Ga.
Mark Pearson, U.S. Coast Guard
Paul Penrod, Md.
Alan Quattrin, Md.

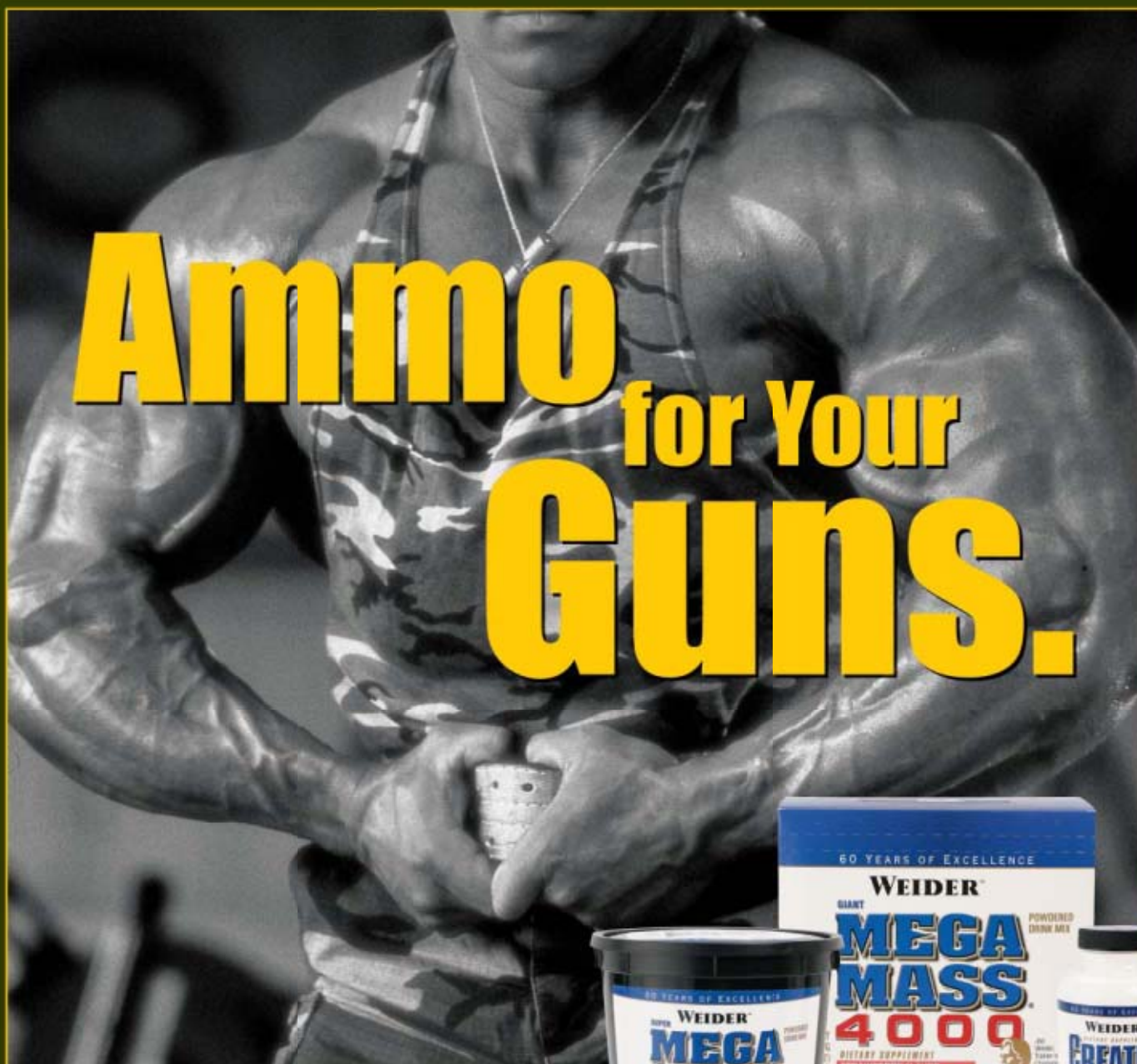
Mike Rega, Ariz.
John Rusko, Ohio
Paul M. Sivacek, Pa.
Seth Stadick, Wyo.
Maj. Chip Stewart,
CGSC Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.
Lee Sullivan, Calif.
Tom Willison, Ind.
Maj. Sean Wyatt, USMC
Gary Young, Calif.

WORTHY OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Daniel Bermudez, Calif.
Joseph Blankier, MD,
Ontario, Canada
John Bucholz, N.J.
Ming Yu Chiang, Singapore
Pierre Corbeil, via e-mail
Keith Czech, Ill.

Carl Dube, Quebec, Canada
Mel Eichelbaum, Texas
Sgt. Robert Martin,
2/224 Aviation Battalion
Adam Petersen, S.D.
Barry A. Siegel, Ga.
Gregory Takeda, Hawaii

Cadet Reed G. Timme,
USMA West Point
Chris Whittaker,
29th Support Group, APO AE
Robert E. Williams II, Ohio
Brian Yon, Manitoba, Canada



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ACG INTERACTIVE ICS

At the Sharp End: Part One
PART ONE

Bloody Peleliu

New Pacific War series! Join Lance Corporal James Devin and his fellow Marines as they battle fanatical Japanese defenders in desperate island combat. **YOU control the outcome!**

BY JOHN ANTAL

8 a.m., September 15, 1944

Lumbering through the choppy waters of the Philippine Sea, Landing Vehicle Tracked Number 14 (LVT 14) dips awkwardly as its bow hits yet another wave. On board, it carries a four-man crew, a 13-man U.S. Marine Corps rifle squad, a two-man bazooka team, and a five-man flamethrower team with two flamethrowers.

Crammed shoulder to shoulder in what is already sweltering heat, the men struggle to keep down their hastily eaten breakfasts.

The LVT is part of a line of amphibious tractors (nicknamed “Amtracs” or “Alligators”) moving ever closer to the beaches of the Japanese-held island of Peleliu. Navy battleships and cruisers have pummeled the island for the past three days, but the bombardment rises to a crescendo as the invasion force approaches. Swarms of carrier planes

circle overhead, waiting their turn to bomb and strafe enemy positions. Specially outfitted ships near the landing area release torrents of screaming rockets onto the beach. Destroyers and cruisers fire final, close-in volleys of white phosphorus shells to help obscure the advancing landing craft from the eyes of Japanese artillery observers.

Standing port astern

One of the Palau islands, Peleliu was a key stepping-stone in Adm. Nimitz's advance. His progress across the Pacific brought the range of deadly land-based airpower ever closer to the Japanese home islands.

in LVT 14, Lance Corporal James Devin watches the extraordinary “fireworks” display. He wishes his older brother, Lewis, could be here to enjoy the show – it is much more impressive than any 4th of July celebration. But he is half a world away in France, serving as a tanker in the U.S. Army. Devin wonders how the war in Europe is going.

This is Devin’s first amphibious landing and his first combat experience. Lewis, however, must be a seasoned veteran already, having been in combat since the Allies invaded Normandy over three months ago. Now it’s little brother’s turn to face enemy fire – he hopes his actions will make Lewis proud.

Devin whispers a short prayer and then looks up to see Sergeant Elliot Reed, his squad leader, staring intently at the beach. He admires the sergeant’s self-confidence and lead-from-the-front style. They make him the kind of leader men *want* to follow. Reed is fond of saying, “There’s a right way, a wrong way, and the Marine Corps way,” insisting that his squad always abide by the latter. The sergeant is a veteran of combat on Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester, and since the majority of the squad is untested, it’s reassuring to have someone like him in charge – especially with the Japanese just ahead.

Devin and his fellow Marines lead a “mushroom” existence – they are kept mostly in the dark about upcoming operations until their task force is well underway toward the objective. While at sea some days ago, Devin found out that they have been headed for Peleliu, a small island in the Palau chain south of the Philippine Sea. He had never heard of the place before, but now he realizes all too well that he might die on this tiny speck of coral on the long road to Tokyo.

Shaped like a lobster claw, Peleliu is only six miles long and is less than three miles wide at its southern end. Of the approximately 10,000 fanatical Japanese soldiers reported to be on the tiny island, the core of the defenders are from the veteran 14th Division, Imperial Japanese Army. Devin knows from briefings that his unit, the 1st Marines, will seize Beach White 1, the northern beachhead, and then push inland. (See Peleliu Amphibious Assault map, page 56.) The 5th Marines will secure the middle beachhead and take the vital Peleliu airfield while the 7th Marines will hit the southern beachhead.





September 1944. A U.S. Marine clutches a radiophone in his hand as he charges across the Peleliu beach.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Suddenly, above the roar of the LVT Reed shouts, "Get ready!"

Standing up and pointing toward the beach, Henderson says, "Looks like the Japs are getting the crap knocked out of them. Maybe there won't be any left for us to kill."

Devin hopes Henderson is correct, but he isn't counting on it. None of the veterans he's talked to have reported that any of these Pacific island invasions have been walkovers.

As the LVT nears the beach, white phosphorus shells burst and blanket the area like burning-hot cotton. Henderson yells, "Look at that! Ten bucks says this will be an easy landing!" Nobody takes the bet – they don't want to jinx the operation.

Devin's fire team – his two riflemen, Privates Dale Moore and Harry Guild, and his M-1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) gunner, Private Joe Henderson – are lined up on the port side of the LVT. Behind them, Private Turner carries an M-9 bazooka, while his

loader, Private Frick, carries an M-1 rifle and a bag of bazooka rockets. The flamethrower team – the "Zippo crew" – is positioned in the middle of the vehicle. Everyone is ready to go.

Standing at the head of the squad, Sergeant Reed holds up three fingers and screams, "Prepare to land! Beachhead in three minutes! When the ramp drops, everybody out!"

"Aye, aye, Sergeant!" Devin and the rest of the men shout in reply.

"Remember your training," Reed says with a serious look. "Go 10 yards from the Amtrac and hit the deck."

Just then, their perfect plan starts to unravel as enemy shells begin to explode in the water. Peering over the gunwale, Devin sees LVT 12 take a direct hit. In a sheet of flame, it sinks into the shallow water, the lives of its Marines snuffed out in the blink of an eye.

Machine-gun bullets whiz overhead and a few smash against LVT 14's bow. Henderson had spoken too soon – there are plenty of Japanese left on the island. Devin wishes the private had just kept his damned mouth shut.

The enemy fire increases in both volume and accuracy the nearer the Marines get to land. The crewmen manning the two .50-caliber machine guns at the LVT's bow charge their guns' bolt handles and blast away at the beach. Suddenly, one of the sailors is slammed backward as a bullet tears through



Lance Cpl. Devin's Fire Team and Attached M-9 Bazooka Team



Lance Cpl. Devin
Team Leader



Pvt. Henderson
BAR Gunner



Pvt. Moore
Asst. BAR Gunner



Pvt. Guild
Rifleman

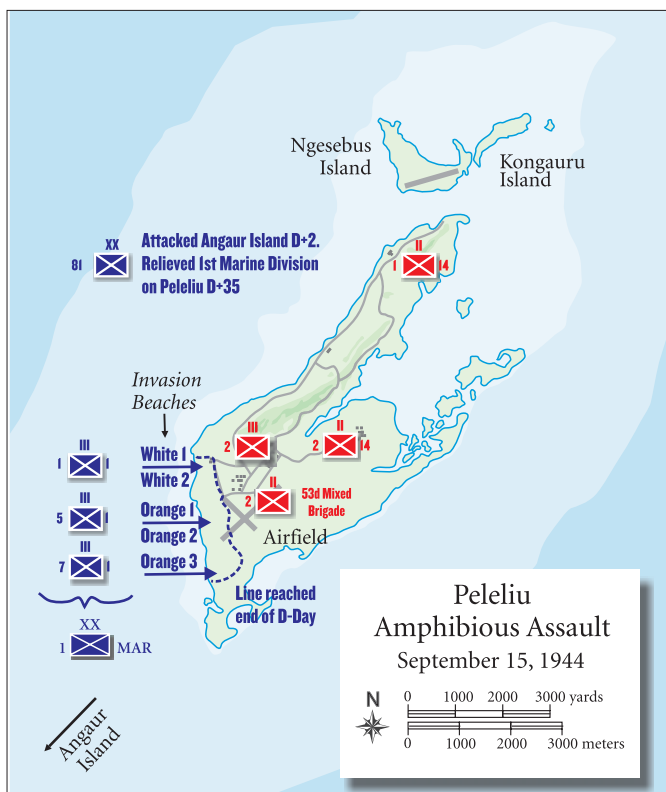


Pvt. Turner
Bazooka

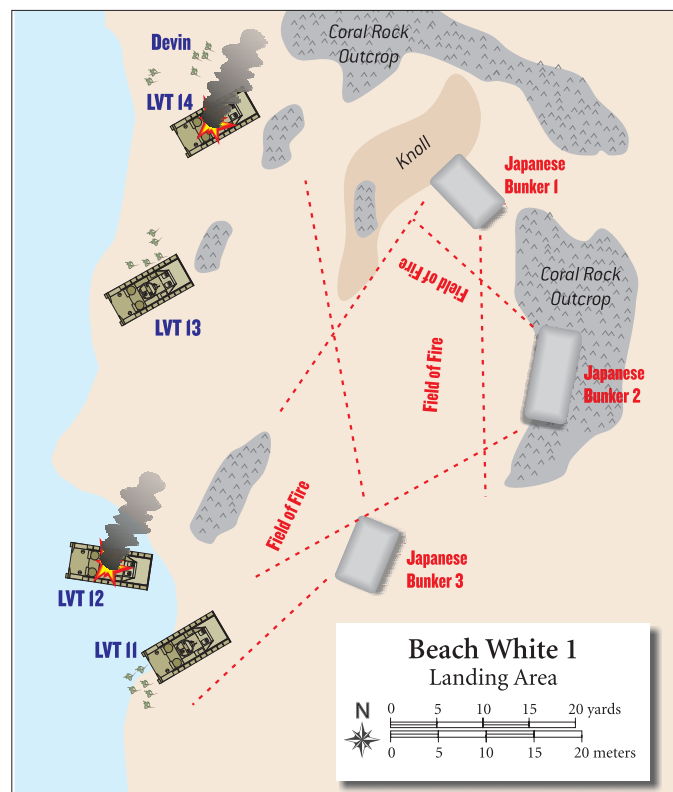


Pvt. Frick
Asst. Bazooka

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U.S. Marine invaders found Peleliu stoutly defended by the veteran Japanese 14th Infantry Division.



Fortified bunkers protect the Japanese defenders and their machine guns, mortars and artillery. Their interlocking fields of fire create deadly kill zones.

his helmet. Devin sees that the left half of the man's face is missing.

The bottom of the LVT grates across the sand as the vehicle pushes up the beach. In the midst of bullets cracking all around, the ramp drops.

"Go, go, go!" Reed bellows.

Devin realizes this is it – real combat. Time seems to move in slow motion as he jumps onto the ramp and runs a few steps before hitting the ground near the LVT's port side. The rest of the team is soon beside him, hugging the sand to avoid the red-hot shell fragments buzzing through the air. But despite the hurricane of fire, no Japanese defenders are in view.

Devin assesses the situation. His three men and the two bazookamen are still alive and are undoubtedly waiting for him to tell them what to do. They can't stay where they are, so he'll have to find a way to get them off the beach.

"Wait here!" Devin shouts to Henderson. He then crawls back to the LVT ramp and

peers inside. He immediately vomits what's left of his breakfast. A direct hit from enemy artillery has killed the LVT's crew as well as Sergeant Reed and the rest of the squad. The shell must have ignited the flamethrowers, literally roasting the men before they had a chance to exit. None of the Marines is recognizable, their humanity having been burned away in a flash.

Backing out of the LVT, Devin keeps a low profile as he attempts to get a glimpse of the other vehicles. He sees Marines huddled around the port side of LVT 13, Platoon Sergeant Hadley's vehicle, but he can't see Hadley. However, the cries of "Corpsman!" tell him that some of the men have been hit. Farther south, LVT 12 sits at the water's edge, wrecked and in flames with no sign of life around it. Beyond that, he can just make out LVT 11, the Alligator that carried the rest of his platoon and his platoon commander, Lieutenant Mueller. The vehicle does not appear to have been destroyed, so

perhaps its Marines survived.

Suddenly, Devin hears Hadley shouting above the din. The platoon sergeant waves his arms to get Devin's attention.

"Where's Reed?" Hadley yells.

Pointing to the smoldering LVT, Devin shouts back, "He's dead! I have five men with me, but the rest on board were killed."

"Same here. In addition to me, five of the guys on our LVT survived. I reached Mueller at LVT 11 over the radio. A few of his men made it, too, but they're pinned down like us and taking cover at the back of their vehicle."

"I can see three Jap bunkers," Hadley continues. (See Beach White 1 map.) "Bunker 1, a small one with a machine gun, is positioned behind the knoll to your front. Twenty yards southeast of that is Bunker 2, the largest bunker. And 20 yards southwest of that is Bunker 3, another small fortification with a machine gun. Got it?"

Devin risks a peek. He can make out the bunker farthest south, but the knoll obscures

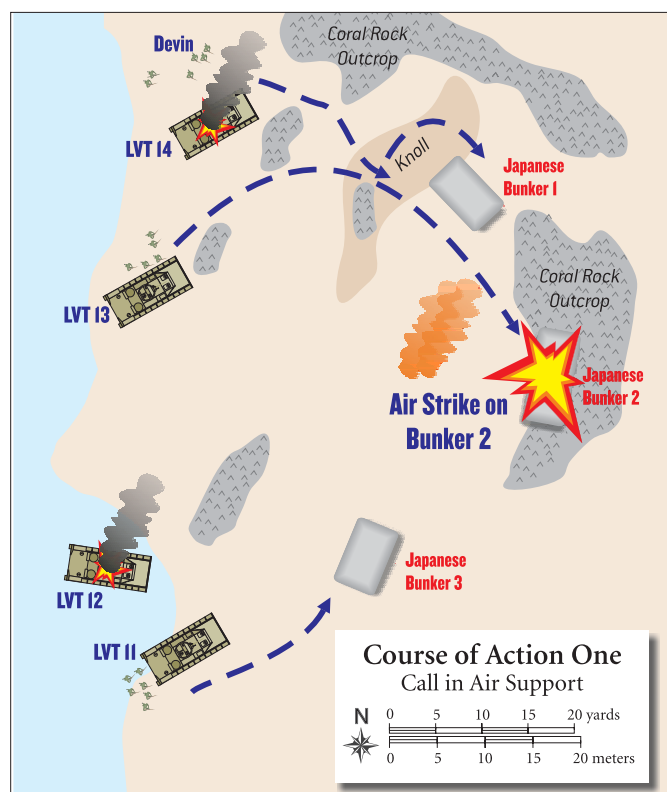
Lance Cpl. James Devin watches the “fireworks” display as naval gunfire pounds the island.



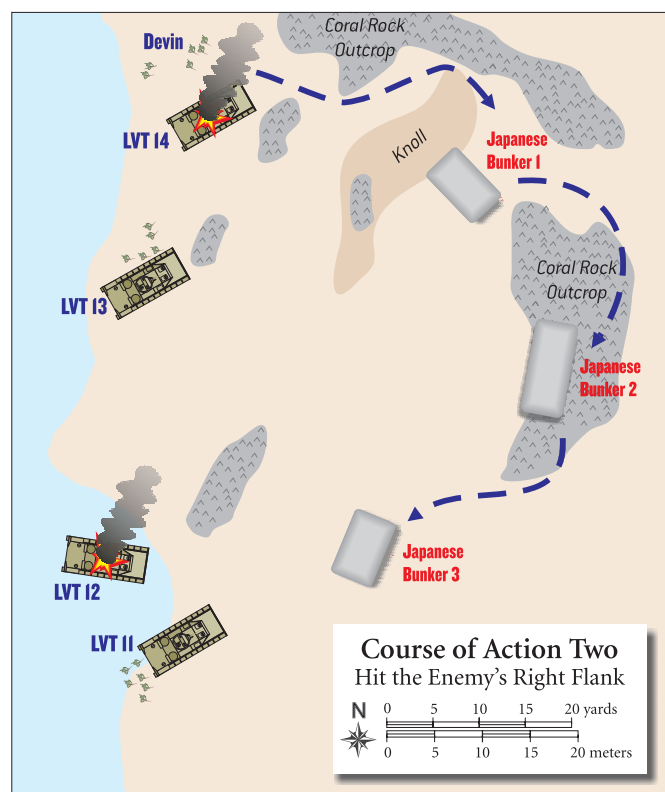
Devin looks out from his LVT and anxiously surveys his designated landing site, Beach White 1.



After making a mad dash from his LVT, Devin seeks cover while he waits for the rest of his team to catch up.



Devin will mark Bunker 2 with smoke to direct the firepower of fighter-bombers against it. After the flyboys knock it out, he will lead his fire team against Bunker 1 while Lt. Mueller’s men take out Bunker 3. Sgt. Hadley’s Marines will check Bunker 2 for survivors.



Devin will lead his fire team and the bazooka team around the northern flank of the Japanese bunker line, attacking each one in turn from the rear.

his view of the other two. He knows from discussions with combat veterans that the fortifications are sited with interlocking fields of fire and that the area to their front is a killing zone.

“My Marines aren’t completely pinned down,” Devin shouts. “We can move to the north to get at the bunkers, but we’ll need some support.”

“I don’t think my men will be of much help initially – nor will Mueller’s,” Hadley replies.

Devin recoils from the thought of leaving the temporary safety of his LVT, but he knows they can’t stay put. “I’m not sure what to do!”

“Damn it, Corporal!” Hadley screams, “I want you to get your ass in gear and figure out how to take out those bunkers. Your first option is to mark the biggest one with a smoke grenade while I call in an air strike. After the fighter-bombers demolish that one, the rest of the platoon might be able to help you take out the others. Or you could do it on your own if you think that’s possi-

ble. Your choice – just get moving!”

Devin hunkers down behind the LVT to consider his options.

COURSE OF ACTION ONE: CALL IN AIR SUPPORT.

By deploying to the top of the knoll, Devin’s bazooka team and riflemen could fire on Bunker 2, the largest one, while he throws a smoke grenade to mark it for fighter-bombers. Once the flyboys arrive and take it out, all the Marines could launch an assault.

Devin’s team could skirt around the north side of the knoll and take out Bunker 1 from the rear, thereby avoiding its field of fire. Mueller’s men could rush Bunker 3 by high-tailing it around its field of fire and attacking it from the side. Once both groups have their attacks underway – and therefore have the attention of the defenders – Hadley’s men could check Bunker 2 for survivors, using the knoll for protection part of the way.

COURSE OF ACTION TWO: HIT THE ENEMY’S RIGHT FLANK.

Since Devin’s men have a route outside the field of fire by which they can approach the bunkers – and since he can’t be sure that the men from LVT 13 or LVT 11 will be in a position to support him at all – he thinks perhaps it would be best if his Marines take out all three bunkers on their own. They could move around the northern edge of the knoll, attacking Bunker 1 first and then maneuvering against the other two in sequence. This plan would also protect the Marines from unintended casualties from an air strike aimed at Bunker 2.

While turning the scenarios over in his mind, Devin’s thoughts are broken by Henderson’s shout, “Hey, Devin! Tell us what the hell to do!”

If you choose for Devin to take Course of Action One: Call in Air Support, turn to PAGE 58

If you choose for Devin to take Course of Action Two: Hit the Enemy’s Right Flank, turn to PAGE 60

The face of this U.S. Marine evidences the strain of the fighting on Peleliu.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PAGE 58 YOU CHOSE COURSE OF ACTION ONE: CALL IN AIR SUPPORT

Devin crawls back to where his men lie pressed against the sandy beach. "Listen up, everybody! Just over that knoll, three Jap bunkers have our entire platoon under fire. We're going to take them out."

The young Marines' faces turn ashen. Henderson worriedly asks, "Why do we have to attack those bunkers? Where's Lieutenant Hadley and the rest of the platoon? Why aren't they helping?"

Devin fixes him with a cold stare and says, "Everybody else is either already dead or pinned down. Now shut up and listen!"

For once, Henderson wisely keeps silent.

"Hadley gave me a couple of ideas. He's been through this before and knows what he's doing, so here's what we're going to do. ...

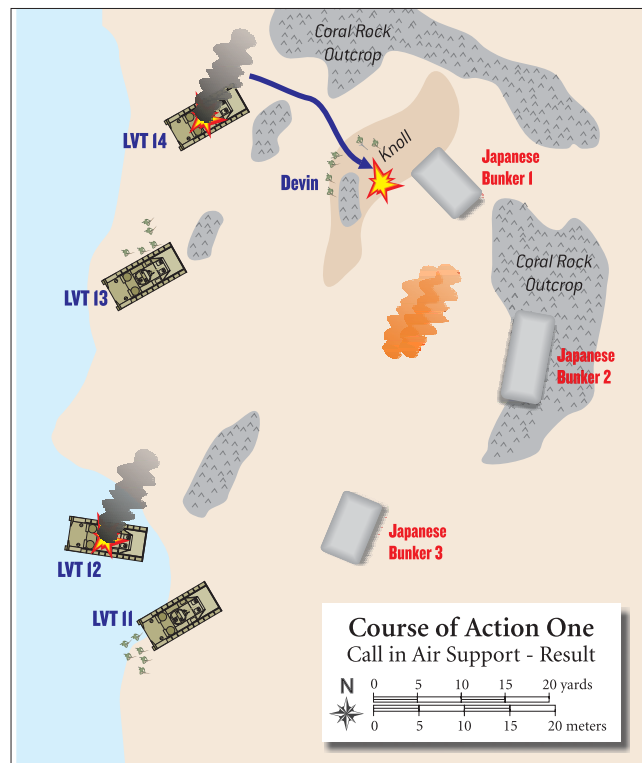
"We'll head to the top of that knoll to our



TOP: Pvt. Joe Henderson lays down a heavy base of fire with his Browning Automatic Rifle.

front. I'll lead off, followed by Henderson, Moore, Guild, Turner and then Frick. Once we get positioned behind the coral outcrop, Henderson will cover me with the BAR while I throw a smoke grenade at Bunker 2 – the middle bunker – to mark it for our fighter-bombers. At the same time, Turner will fire his bazooka at the bunker. Hadley will call on the radio for an air strike, and once the flyboys do their job, we can attack Bunker 1 from the rear without worrying about interference from Bunker 2. Meantime, Mueller's men will

sneak up on Bunker 3 from the side and take care of its defenders. Soon as the attacks at 1 and 3 are underway – and the Japs' attention is focused to their rear and sides – Hadley's men will creep over to Bunker 2 just to make



TOP: Henderson screams in agony as his face is peppered with razor-sharp shards of coral splintered by a Japanese machine-gun bullet.

LEFT: Upon reaching the knoll, Devin marks Bunker 2 with smoke and waits for the fighter-bombers. He soon discovers that the top of the mound exposes his team to deadly fire from the Japanese bunkers.

sure that no one survived the bombing."

The men look tense and scared, but Devin knows they'll follow orders. He takes a deep breath and then leaves the group to go tell his plans to Hadley, who will then pass the information to Mueller.

When Devin returns a moment later, he asks his Marines if they understand the mission. Each man nods gravely. "Good, then move out!" he shouts.

Running in a half-crouch, Devin leads the way as the rest of the squad follows closely behind. They keep their heads low so that the knoll and the coral outcrops protect them from the heaviest of the Japanese fire.

Panting hard from the effort and the excitement, Devin reaches the bottom of the slope first. The others arrive soon thereafter and he quickly issues orders.

"Henderson, get to my right; Turner, get to my left. When we reach the top, at my signal, open up on Bunker 2 with the BAR and the bazooka while I throw the smoke grenade. The rest of you, follow behind us and take over if anyone gets hit."

Devin begins to crawl up the slope on his elbows and knees with his M-1 rifle cradled in his arms. "Just like they taught us in training," he mumbles to himself.

When the Marines reach the top of the mound, Henderson, Devin and Turner take cover behind a large chunk of coral while the other men lie flat on their stomachs. After a second, Devin motions for Henderson to fire.

The private edges gingerly around the coral and begins to blast away at the bunker's firing slit. Meanwhile, Devin pulls the pin on the smoke grenade and heaves it as hard as he can in the direction of Bunker 2. Just as he ducks back down, machine-gun bullets splinter the coral. Sharp, deadly shards rip into Henderson's face and upper body. The private screams, dropping the BAR and covering his eyes with his hands.

Devin grabs Henderson and pushes him down the slope shouting, "Moore! Take care of him!" Spinning back around, he commands, "Turner, fire the damned bazooka!"

"Firing!" Turner yells.

A hot blast of exhaust shoots from the back of the tube and the rocket blazes a fiery trail toward the bunker. Before Turner can take cover again, machine-gun bullets rake the top of the knoll, striking the private in the head and chest. Devin watches in horror

Devin knows from discussions with combat veterans that the bunkers are sited with interlocking fields of fire and that the area to their front is a killing zone.

September 1944. An LVT burns on the beach as Marines scramble to find shelter from heavy enemy fire.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

as bullets slam into Turner's lifeless body, which is now slumped over his bazooka.

The round explodes, but the Japanese machine gun continues to fire. "What the hell went wrong?" Devin angrily wonders aloud. He had followed Hadley's suggestion,

Play It!

Relive the fight for Peleliu by playing the scenarios "Surprise at Peleliu" and "Another Bloody Ridge" in HPS' *Squad Battles: The Proud and the Few*. For more options, please visit playit.armchairgeneral.com.

and now his bazookaman lay dead and his BAR gunner is badly wounded.

Devin glances around to check on the rest of his team. Private Moore is tending to Henderson at the foot of the slope, and Frick and Guild are nearby, avoiding the killing ground at the top of the bullet-swept knoll. Devin realizes that they are waiting for his orders. He tries to come up with a plan, but ultimately turns over onto his back to wait for the fighter-bombers to swoop in and finish the job. Until then, there's little he can do.

Minutes pass and the marker smoke clears. *Where the hell are the flyboys?* Devin wonders. Either Hadley's call for air support didn't get through, or the planes are too

busy bombing other targets. One thing is almost certain – they're not coming. He racks his brain to come up with a logical next move, but the situation looks bleak.

Suddenly, Devin hears the clatter of a grenade landing on the coral a few feet away. For a split second, he remembers his concerns on the LVT – he is indeed going to die on this tiny speck of coral in the Pacific Ocean. Summoning every ounce of strength, he leaps toward the grenade and desperately tries to grab it to throw it back. The last thing he sees before the blinding flash is the crystal-clear Pacific sky.

Devin has been killed. Turn to page 60 and read Course of Action Two.

ACG INTERACTIVE ICS

PAGE 60 YOU CHOSE COURSE OF ACTION TWO: HIT THE ENEMY'S RIGHT FLANK

Crawling over to his Marines, Devin plops down as their faces turn toward him. "All right, everybody listen up!" he shouts. "The six of us are going to take out three Jap bunkers giving our guys hell just over that knoll."

"Why do we have to do it?" Henderson blurts out. "Where's the rest of the squad ... the rest of the platoon for that matter?"

Trying to keep his emotions at bay, Devin answers, "Reed and the rest of the squad are gone. Forget about them. We can't count on anyone else from the platoon either because they are all pinned down or already dead. Now shut up and listen!"

For once, Henderson wisely remains silent. His face, however, reflects the terror each man feels.

"Sergeant Hadley's given us two different suggestions for destroying the bunkers," Devin explains. "First, we could make the flyboys earn their pay by calling in an air strike on the largest of the three bunkers ..."

Henderson interjects, "That's right! We'll just hunker down here while the flyboys blast those bunkers to bits!"



A member of the 1st Marine Division employs his carbine and hand grenades to eliminate dug-in Japanese troops on Peleliu.

"Shut up!" Devin barks. "If we call in the fighter-bombers, we'll have to move close enough to the middle bunker to mark it for them. That means we'll have to get our butts to the top of that knoll."

Henderson's expression immediately changes to one of deep concern.

Devin says, "That's right – if we move there, we'll be able to see the bunkers all right ... but the Jap gunners will sure as hell

be able to see us, too. And if they can see us, they can hit us. We'd get pinned down just like the rest of the platoon."

"So what are we supposed to do then?" Henderson asks. "The top of the mound is a graveyard!"

"Hadley also said we had the option of moving around the northern side of the knoll where we can likely get behind the bunkers. From there, we've got a chance to take them out on our own, one by one."

Devin senses that the men don't like that idea very much either, but considering the alternative – exposing themselves to a blizzard of Japanese fire on the knoll and then being close to where the flyboys would drop their bombs – it seems the lesser of two evils.

"I'll take the lead," Devin explains, "followed by Henderson with the BAR and Turner with the bazooka. The rest of you fall in behind us. We'll skirt the northern edge of the knoll and try to work our way against each bunker from the rear. Got it?"

The Marines nod their understanding, and Devin leaves to tell Hadley of his decision.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

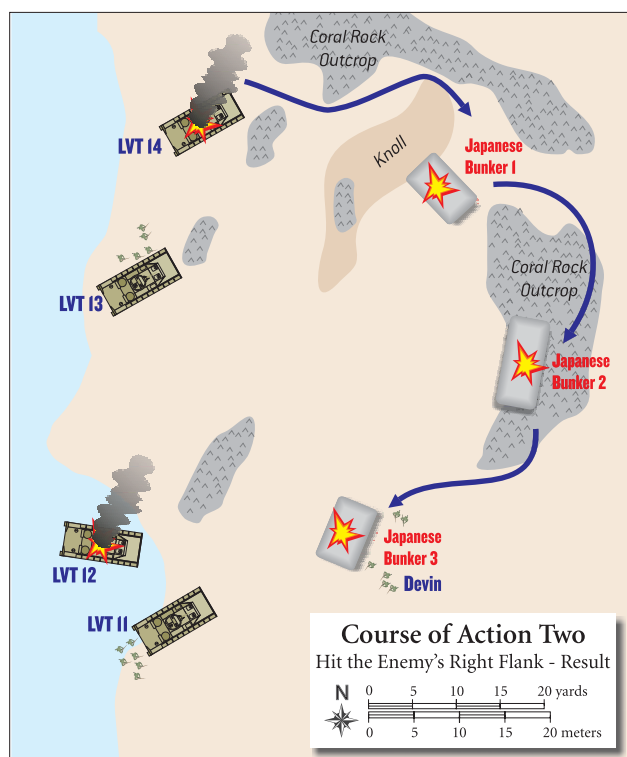


ABOVE: Even after suffering minor casualties, Devin and his team work furiously to destroy the remaining Japanese bunkers that have the rest of the platoon pinned down.

LEFT: Pvt. Turner prepares to take out one of the bunkers with a bazooka round.

RIGHT: In the calm after the storm, Devin takes a minute to smoke a well-earned cigarette and reflect on his first combat action.

“We can’t count on anyone else from the platoon either because they are all pinned down or already dead.”



Avoiding the kill zone, Devin leads his Marines around the northern side of the knoll so they can assault each bunker from its more vulnerable rear.

palm fronds, is the back entrance of Bunker 1. Also visible from his position are the firing ports of the other two bunkers.

“Henderson,” Devin commands, “cover me with the BAR. As for the rest of you, find a good field of fire and stay put!”

With his M-1 cradled in the crook of his arms, Devin crawls toward the bunker’s rear entrance – just like they taught him in training. Soon, he’s close enough to hear excited voices shouting in Japanese. Luckily, the de-

fenders’ attention appears to be focused to the front.

Devin quietly removes two grenades from his fatigue blouse and then carefully pulls the pins while holding down the handles. As he releases both at once, he hopes the metallic “ping” doesn’t alert the Japanese to his presence. After a quick “one, two” count, he pitches the grenades through the bunker’s

rear entrance and buries his face in the sand.

The near-simultaneous blasts cover Devin with grit and palm fronds. Before the smoke can clear, Henderson rushes up and pokes the barrel of the BAR through an opening and empties his clip into what’s left of the enemy. When he’s through, no sign of life remains inside the shredded bunker.

The next 20 minutes pass in a blur of frenzied activity – running, firing, sweating and killing. Supported by Turner firing one bazooka rocket after the other at each remaining bunker, Devin and Henderson repeat the actions used to take out the first one – tossing in two grenades from the rear and then finishing off the Japs with the BAR.

Once the final bunker has been cleared, Devin leans shakily against its side. He pulls a well-earned cigarette from his pocket and glances at his watch. It’s just past 9 a.m.

“That’s funny,” he says, drawing deeply and savoring the tobacco’s flavor. “I could swear we’ve spent all day at this.” He then slumps into a sitting position ... and promptly falls asleep.

Henderson walks over to the dozing Marine, shakes his head, and gently removes the burning cigarette from Devin’s mouth. “Semper fi, Mac,” Henderson mutters, then walks quietly away. ★

Colonel (Ret) John Antal served 30 years in the U.S. Army and commanded combat units from platoon to regiment. He has published over 50 magazine articles and six books, including “Armor Attacks,” “Infantry Combat,” “Combat Team” and “Proud Legions.”

“ACG” thanks the curator and staff of The Tank Museum, Bovington, U.K., for their assistance with this article.

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ACG INTERACTIVE WHAT NEXT GENERAL?

Rommel

at El Alamein

The Desert Fox met his match at this turning-point World War II battle. Can YOU win his toughest fight?

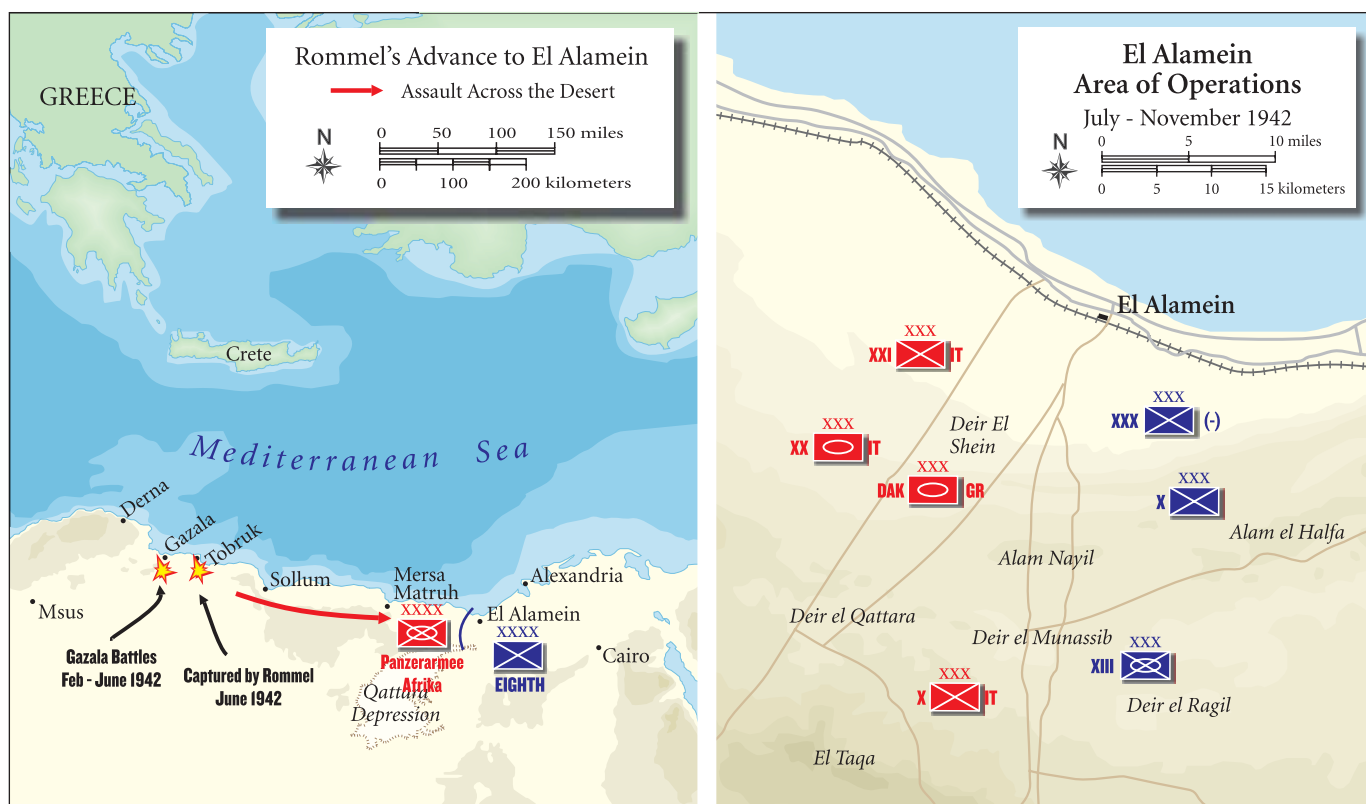
BY RICHARD ARMSTRONG

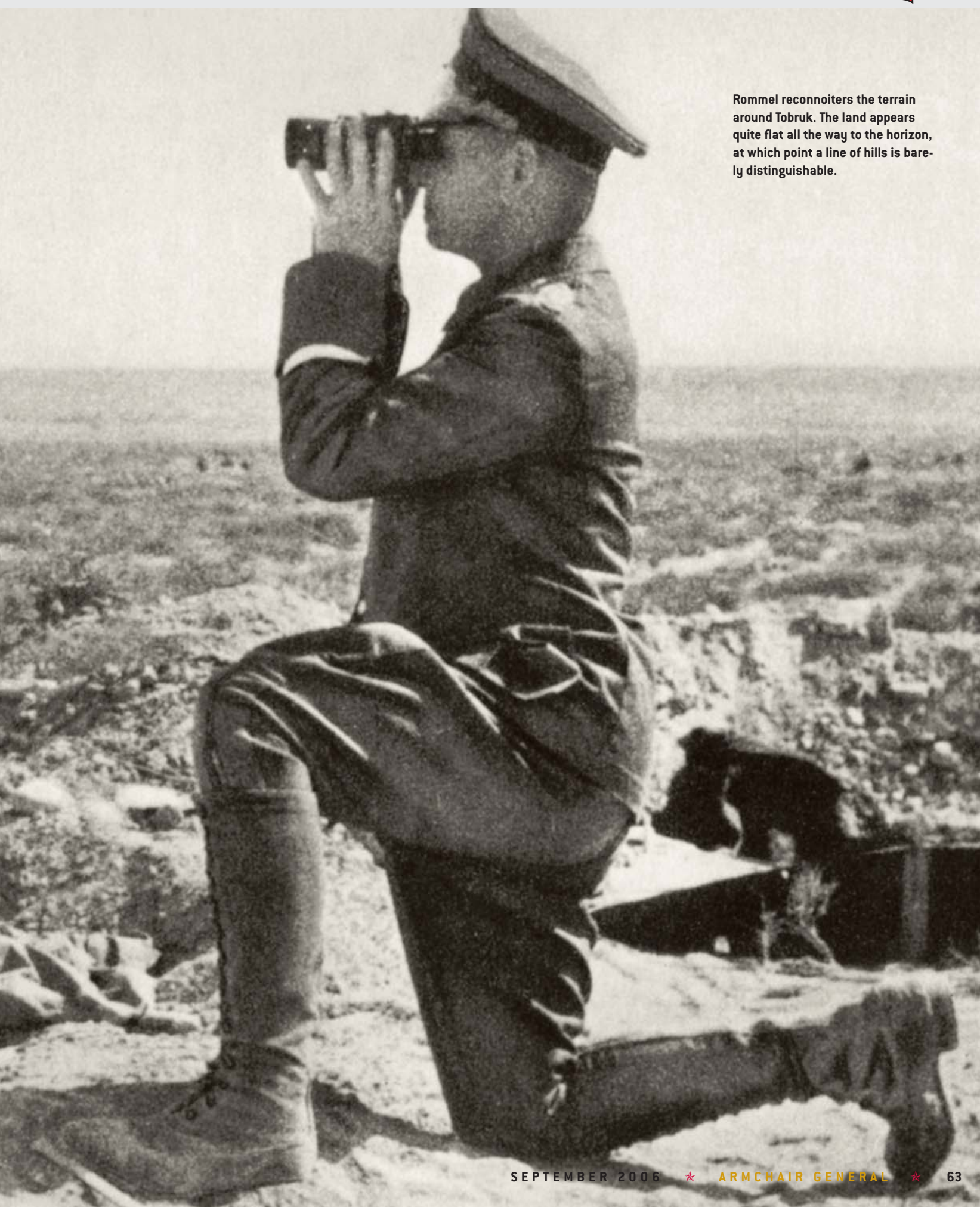
You are thrilled that your stellar triumph convinced Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler to promote you to field marshal – you are the youngest German officer to hold this honor. You have earned a reputation as a great leader, and friend and foe alike call you “the Desert Fox.” However, you cannot afford to grow complacent, especially now. Your supply line is stretched dangerously thin, with fuel, transport and tanks in particularly short supply and your troops nearing exhaustion. Yet the Suez Canal – an important strategic prize – lies just beyond the horizon. If you can win here at El Alamein, your “Christmas present” to the führer will be a German stranglehold on Britain’s vital link to its colonies in the Far East. Neither your rivals nor any of the aristocratic Junkers on the general staff (whom you and Hitler both

You are about to assume the role of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commander of Panzerarmee Afrika, facing the Eighth British Army at El Alamein in the Egyptian desert. It is July 3,

1942, and your German and Italian forces have succeeded once again in chasing British and Commonwealth troops deep into Egypt. You have captured the bastion of Tobruk and have herded Britain’s famed “Desert Rats” into POW cages.

BELOW: Rommel’s desert campaign in 1942 carried his German and Italian forces to the gates of Egypt. Waiting for the Desert Fox at El Alamein, however, was a revitalized British army under a skillful and dynamic new commander, Gen. Bernard Montgomery.





Rommel reconnoiters the terrain around Tobruk. The land appears quite flat all the way to the horizon, at which point a line of hills is barely distinguishable.

ACG INTERACTIVE WHAT NEXT GENERAL?

despise) can claim such a victory.

You have asked for miracles from your troops before and they have delivered – but can they do so again? You shall soon find out.

What next, Field Marshal?

BRITAIN'S DESERT BOGEYMAN

With a determined gaze, you stare at the map spread across the table in front of you. Despite your previous successes, your current situation is fraught with dangers that threaten to unravel the hard-won victories your men have earned. The longer you drive them across this desert battleground, the farther they move away from your base of supply.

“Logistics,” you mutter in disgust. “The realm of the damned pencil pushers!” You despise having your operational plans shackled by your forces’ dependence on a tenuous logistical link that is drawn out across the easily interdicted Mediterranean. Yet you have learned that it is just a stark fact of life in this desert war.

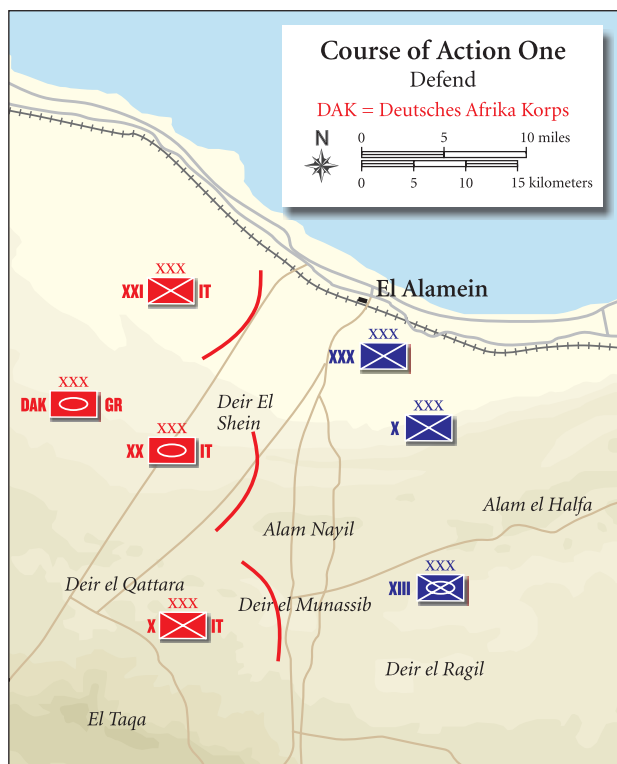
You prefer always to be at the head of your panzers and infantry, directing bold attacks against an enemy whose battlefield leadership at all levels has proved woefully inadequate. Your success has compelled the British to make a recent command change; on June 25, General Claude Auchinleck took control of the Eighth British Army. Auchinleck leads in a much more aggressive manner than his predecessors. British attacks and counterattacks all along the El Alamein line – combined with your logistical problems – have resulted in a stalemate.

Yet your psychological domination of your enemy continues, and Auchinleck has

even thought it necessary to issue a command directive attempting to counter your larger-than-life image among his officers and soldiers. (See sidebar, page 68.) Glancing once more at the German translation of an intercepted copy of Auchinleck’s message, you can’t help but smile at his references to you as a “superman” and “bogyman.”

Your attention, however, soon returns to the map. El Alamein is the last defensible position between your forces and Cairo, Egypt’s capital. Defeating the British here will surely open the way to Cairo, the Suez Canal, and beyond. Your enemy is also aware of this fact, which explains the stiffening resistance you have encountered as well as the sudden increase in British willingness to attack and counterattack.

The British defend stubbornly, and the El Alamein line itself is geographically well positioned and difficult to crack – you have already tried, with little success. Lack of maneuver space is one major problem. Your enemy’s northern flank is anchored on the Mediterranean coast while his southern flank rests 40 miles south on the impassable



Hampered by dwindling logistical supplies, especially fuel and transport, you deploy your forces in strong defensive positions to repel the expected British attack.

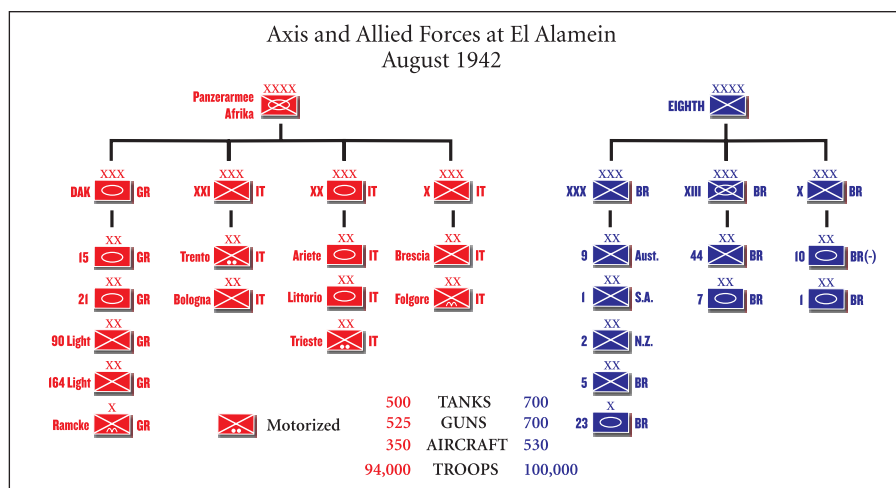
terrain of the Qattara Depression.

The vast reaches of the North African desert frequently have been your ally, facilitating the type of mobile warfare at which your panzers and motorized infantry are most adept. However, restricted now to the 40-mile El Alamein Front, your opportunities for maneuvering around your enemy this time are severely limited.

Moreover, the British gain strength every day thanks to the United States, a new ally, sending them substantial numbers of tanks and supplies of ammunition. Meanwhile, your own forces grow weaker. You must quickly develop a plan of action before the British become capable of launching an overpowering general offensive against your depleted units.

Despite deteriorating health – you suffer from jaundice and a severe nasal infection – you have given the operational problem much thought and have come up with three possible courses of action.

Course of Action One: Defend After five weeks of continuous fighting that has re-



You have captured the bastion of Tobruk
and have herded Britain's famed
"Desert Rats" into POW cages.

Rommel travels with the
15th Panzer Division
between Tobruk and
Sidi Omar, Libya,
in late 1941.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RIGHT: Capt. Wilhelm Bach, de-
fender of the Halfaya Pass,
salutes Gen. Rommel during a
meeting after the battle. Ital-
ian Maj. Gen. Giorgio Count
Calvi di Bergolo (left back-
ground) looks on.



HANS GERT FREIHERR VON ESEBECK*

FAR RIGHT: Rommel looks on
as Germans troops round up
thousands of prisoners in
Mechili (Mukhayla), about 200
kilometers west of Tobruk.



HANS GERT FREIHERR VON ESEBECK*



HANS GERT FREIHERR VON ESEBECK*

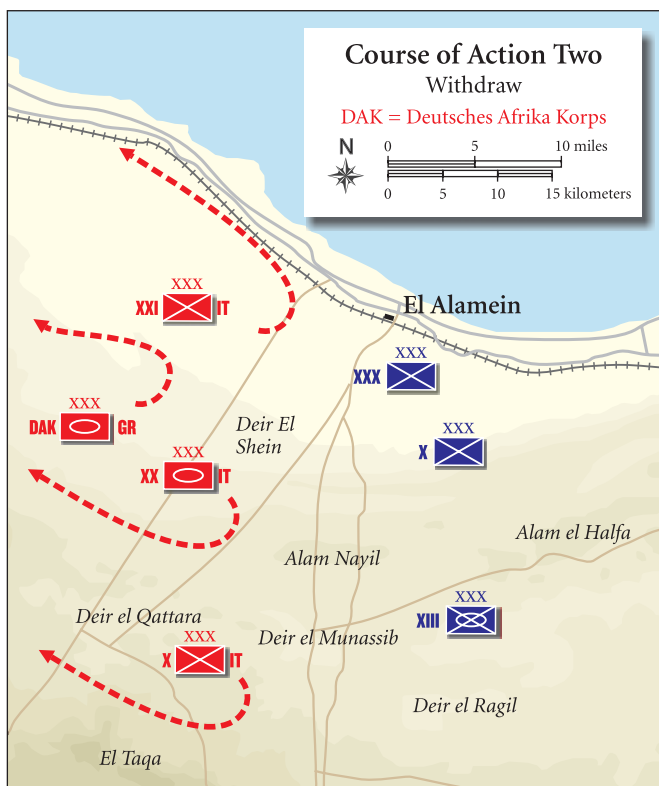
Rommel speaks with Field Marshal Count Ugo Cavallero (right),
commander in chief of the Italian armed forces in Libya.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Rommel speaks with senior leaders of the Afrika Korps during a
battlefield meeting.

ACG INTERACTIVE WHAT NEXT GENERAL?



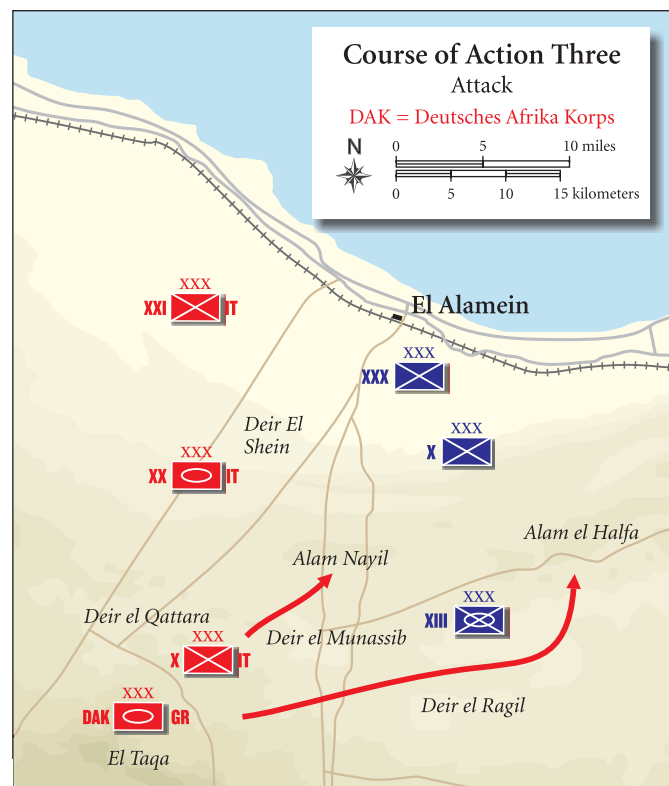
With men and equipment pushed beyond the breaking point by months of hard fighting, you conduct an orderly withdrawal to shorten your overstretched supply line and regroup your exhausted army.

duced your panzer units to only a handful of tanks, you are in no position to attack, let alone break through the Eighth British Army's line at El Alamein. You must build a strong defense in order to rest, rearm and refit your force. By defending in your present positions, you conserve precious resources, some of which can be diverted by the German high command for the long-overdue invasion of Malta, the strategic Mediterranean island-bastion sitting astride your line of communications. A successful invasion of Malta will increase your supply flow, permitting your forces to gain substantial strength. Then early next year, you intend to resume your offensive to drive the British out of Egypt and capture the Suez Canal.

Course of Action Two: Withdraw By withdrawing west to the Egyptian frontier in the vicinity of Sollum, you can shorten your supply routes and occupy terrain that is better situated for creating your own strong defensive line. This will require convincing Hitler to allow you to retreat, but your close

relationship with the führer should serve you well in this regard. After all, he has been your personal "sponsor" and is directly responsible for your rapid rise in the army. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels has created your public image as "the führer's general" and Hitler will likely be reluctant to overrule "his" commander. Besides, you can assure him that withdrawing to terrain that is more open will lure the British from their anchored defense and thereby return the fight to the type of mobile warfare at which your forces excel. Your shortened supply line will allow faster reconstitution of units, which can be used to resume the offensive when the opportunity presents itself. By holding out the promise of more African victories, you can help Hitler and Goebbels draw the German public's attention away from problems on the Russian Front.

Course of Action Three: Attack Launching an attack best suits your temperament. Moreover, this aggressive option will likely take your British enemy by surprise.



Montgomery's forces at El Alamein represent Britain's final hope for preventing you from capturing the strategically important Suez Canal. You follow your instincts and attack. Next stop Cairo!

Auchinleck will not expect you to advance given the state of your troops and equipment – he certainly would not take such a risk were he in your position. But that is exactly the mentality that will give your plan a chance to succeed. You have done this before in these desert campaigns and gained great victories as a result.

You will pause only temporarily to rest, rearm and refit your forces. You will attack and break through the British positions with your German units while your Italian forces pin down the enemy. After the breakthrough, your panzers will seize the coastal road and then strike for Alexandria to the east. With the Eighth Army collapsed and the Alexandrian port captured, a Malta invasion to secure your supply line will be unnecessary and the Suez Canal will be within your grasp.

COURSE OF ACTION ONE: DEFEND

Given the unusually stiff British defenses all along the El Alamein Front, you decide

The German high command is filled with aristocratic officers jealous of your success and the favor you hold with Hitler.

that your best option is to defend generally along your current line. This will afford German and Italian forces elsewhere in the Mediterranean area a respite during which they can invade Malta and secure your searoutes of supply.

As your first task, you pull back your most exposed German panzer units to have them resupplied while your Italian infantry divisions are refitted. You order materiel brought forward with which to build an impenetrable defense within fortified zones known as “devil’s gardens” – barriers of mines and wire that canalize attacks into concentrated defensive fires. In some “gardens” you plant up to nine successive minefields. This sturdy defense allows you to keep your best forces fluid until the battle takes shape. You also make a special effort to protect your wireless intercept company in order to maintain good intelligence on British locations and activities.

Throughout the remainder of July, the British initiate local attacks against your Italian defensive positions, and some break under the terrible artillery barrages. Once the enemy forces a gap in your defenses, his tanks and infantry rush in. You immediately send the nearest German units to counter the threat and patch the breaches. Your panzer troops get little rest, and expected reinforcements do not arrive. With alarm, you note increasing British air superiority. The constant heavy bomber raids inflict casualties and equipment losses on your units.

By mid-August, two main concerns dominate your thoughts – your new nemesis and your old supply problems. On August 18, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill appointed General Bernard Montgomery as new commander of Eighth Army and appointed General Harold Alexander as overall Commander in Chief, Middle East. Alexander’s duties will free Montgomery to concentrate all his efforts on Eighth Army operations – and on finding a way to beat you.

Your second concern, resupply, is an ongoing one. The Italians have disregarded your request that provisions, weapons and ammunition be sent through Tobruk and instead are concentrating them at Benghazi and Tripoli – respectively, 800 and 1,300 miles behind the front. The length of the line makes transportation an agonizingly slow and dangerous process. Trucks are in short



A German PzKw IV passes a destroyed British tank in the North African desert.

supply, and attempts to use the British railway from Sollum have resulted in the transfer of only 300 tons per day instead of the planned 1,500 tons.

Throughout September, the Eighth Army grows stronger daily from supplies brought forward on British and American ships. You loathe having to stand by waiting for the inevitable British offensive; however, your chance to take Egypt and the Suez Canal in a single, crushing attack has passed. The steady bomber attacks and artillery barrages not only hinder your refitting but also preclude any significant stockpiling for the resumption of the offensive. You fear you will never be able to match the British strength now.

After a month of declining health, your doctor, Professor Horsters, requests that the German high command send you home for convalescent leave. You have no choice in the matter; it is an order you must obey. You are forced to turn over command of the panzerarmee and observe the situation from Germany.

On October 23, Montgomery launches the expected British offensive. Your replacement, however, is killed early in the battle and you are recalled to Africa. Montgomery has prepared his attack down to the smallest of details, and although his troops encounter difficulty breaking through your “gardens,” they are making progress. You cannot hope

to hold them back much longer.

On November 8, you receive reports that the Allies have landed units far to your rear on the northwest coast of Africa. You are compelled to withdraw from El Alamein to deal with this new threat. Trapped between these two forces, you realize that the campaign is lost and that you command a doomed army.

COURSE OF ACTION TWO: WITHDRAW

Your overextended supply line, the unexpected stoutness of the British defenses, and the restricted area of the El Alamein region convince you that withdrawal is your best option. You brace yourself for the inevitable confrontation with Hitler.

Through Rudolf Schmundt, your confidential “back door” contact, you send the führer a detailed message outlining the advantages of this course of action. You have often used Schmundt, Hitler’s senior Wehrmacht adjutant, to plead your case and he has always been one of your personal champions. Contacting the dictator through this method avoids exposing your plans to the high command, which is filled with aristocratic officers jealous of your success and the favor you hold with Hitler.

After an exchange of several messages – aided by Schmundt’s persuasive lobbying on

ACG INTERACTIVE **WHAT NEXT GENERAL?**

your behalf – Hitler reluctantly agrees to a withdrawal to the Egyptian border. You pull back your forces to the Egyptian frontier in the vicinity of Sollum where you have more room for maneuver, especially in the open desert to the south. As anticipated, the move shortens your supply line while increasing that of the British. Air-landing fuel supplies close to your units also cuts down on consumption when transporting them to the front. In addition, British bombers are unable to conduct as many sorties against this more distant position, yet German air support is more readily available.

General Bernard Montgomery, the Eighth Army's new commander, is as of yet an unknown quantity. However, his initial handling of his forces seems cautious but clever. As his troops move against your new defensive line, he turns back his left flank to protect his exposed southern area and rear. He presumes, correctly, that you would target these areas to forestall a British offensive by attacking his supply lines and dumps.

Meanwhile, the British continue to strengthen their forces and aggressively pound your units from the air. You realize that Montgomery is likely preparing the battlefield for an upcoming Eighth Army offensive – and from the reports you are receiving, he is doing an unusually thorough job of it.

You decide to launch a few limited attacks of your own to disrupt your enemy's plans. Employing wide, encircling movements, your forces inflict heavy tank losses. The results of these attacks demonstrate that your commanders, particularly those in armored units, respond much quicker and show greater initiative than the enemy commanders. British "situational awareness" (the ability to size up how an action is progressing and adjust accordingly) is slow, but the Brits are learning.

While Montgomery continues to ready his forces, you suffer health problems that reach critical proportions. In September, your doctor, Professor Horsters, appeals to the German high command to order you back to Germany for medical treatment.

Therefore, you are forced to hand over command of your panzerarmee and return to Germany where you monitor the situation from a distance.

On November 8, 1942, the Allies land on the coast of northwest Africa – your army now faces enemies to the east and to the west. Montgomery, at last satisfied that his preparations are complete, launches

Auchinleck's "Rommel" Message

The psychological impact of Rommel's victories on his British enemy became so great that the opposing British commander, General Claude Auchinleck, thought it necessary to issue a directive to all subordinate commanders. Auchinleck's successor, General Bernard Montgomery, adopted this same theme in his talks with Eighth Army commanders and troops – with rather more successful results.

To: All Commanders and Chiefs of Staff
From: Headquarters, MEF

There is a real danger that our friend Rommel is becoming a kind of magician or bogeyman to our troops, who are talking far too much about him. He is by no means a superman, although he is undoubtedly very energetic and able. Even if he were a superman, it would still be highly undesirable that our men should credit him with supernatural powers.

I wish you to dispel by all possible means the idea that Rommel represents something more than an ordinary German general. The important thing now is to see that we do not always talk of Rommel when we mean the enemy in Libya. We must refer to "the Germans," or "the Axis powers," or "the enemy" and not always keep harping on Rommel.

Please ensure that this order is put into immediate effect, and impress upon all commanders that, from a psychological point of view, it is a matter of the highest importance.

C. J. Auchinleck
General, Commander in Chief
Middle East Forces

the long-awaited offensive. You immediately ask to be returned to your command, but Goebbels convinces Hitler that your propaganda value as "the führer's general" is too important to be risked and Hitler therefore turns down your request. As you stand by watching from afar, your Panzerarmee Afrika is trapped, defeated and then taken into captivity.

COURSE OF ACTION THREE: ATTACK

Historical Analysis

There was no single "Battle of El Alamein." Rather, the struggle for El Alamein was a series of military encounters that began in early July 1942 and concluded with Montgomery's watershed triumph in November. However, Rommel's battles in July and August were the most crucial in determining Germany's eventual defeat. When Rommel's hope for a quick breakthrough ended, his exhausted panzerarmee lost the opportunity for victory.

Rommel's Italian infantry divisions constituted a weak link in his plan of attack. Depending on them to hold the British in place at defensive positions in the center and northern sectors, he pulled back German units to rearm and refit for the southern attacks. However, throughout July, British artillery and infantry attacks smashed Italian formations and tied up German units in counterattacks. Rommel lost his precious wireless intercept company in one of these attacks and fought blindly thereafter. "Militarily," he wrote, "this is the most difficult period I've ever been through."

As the fighting continued into August, fresh formations arrived to reinforce the German-Italian panzerarmee and tank strength increased. Although Rommel's supply situation improved somewhat, he had accumulated less than 25 percent of the fuel needed for a major attack. Nonetheless, realizing that time was on the enemy's side and that staying at El Alamein would only starve his force, Rommel decided on a final attempt to break through to the Nile. He chose the area of Alam Halfa Ridge for a quick penetration and ordered the attack to open on the night of August 30-31.

Meanwhile, General Bernard Montgomery, placed in command of Eighth Army on August 18, immediately set about improving British morale and fighting spirit, capitalizing on the positive changes his pred-

The course of further fighting would therefore be up to Montgomery. The crafty little Briton clearly realized this and began detailed preparations for an overpowering offensive to be delivered in his own good time.



British troops escort a group of German prisoners to the rear after heavy fighting in late 1941.

ecessor, Auchinleck, had instituted.

Before Rommel's attack could be launched, Montgomery reinforced the Alam Halfa position. Slowed by unexpected minefields, the German panzers were caught in daylight and heavily bombed by British aircraft. Having lost the element of surprise, Rommel modified his attack to encompass a more limited objective, but his panzers found themselves bogged down in soft sand. With their maneuverability restricted, the Germans encountered two armored brigades almost as strong as the Afrika Korps. Running short of fuel, Rommel threw a division against Alam Halfa Ridge, but heavy artillery, bomber attacks and a reinforced defense compelled him to call off the offensive.

Four days of battle had cost Rommel his scarce supplies, and with the defeat at Alam Halfa, he was forced to give up the initiative. The course of further fighting would therefore be up to Montgomery. The crafty little Briton clearly realized this and began detailed preparations for an overpowering offensive to be delivered in his own good time.

On September 21, despite his doctor's care, Rommel's health issues incapacitated

him. He turned over his command and left for an extended period of convalescence in Germany. Horsters' diagnosis, radioed to the German high command, was intercepted and a copy ended up on Montgomery's desk.

On the night of October 23, Montgomery launched his offensive. With forces that nearly doubled its enemy's strength in troops and tanks, Eighth Army fought with air superiority and greater firepower. Although the British offensive stalled several times, Montgomery pressed on. By November 2, the famous "devil's gardens" were in British hands.

After his replacement was killed early in the offensive, Rommel was returned to command. Although his defenses had held out beyond reasonable expectations, they were now crumbling and he therefore decided to fall back. Hitler sent an overriding order insisting that El Alamein be held at all costs. Rommel, however, disobeyed the order and began the most difficult of military operations – a retreat after defeat.

On November 8, as Rommel slipped beyond Montgomery's grasp, the Allies conducted Operation Torch, landing on

the North African coast. Rommel hence led his panzerarmee back to Tunisia, his 1941 starting position.

With Allied armies closing in from both the east and the west, defeat was certain. Yet Rommel's Panzerarmee Afrika was still dangerous – as the Americans discovered when they were beaten soundly at Kasserine Pass in February 1943. Anxious to save his propaganda investment and to rally the faithful for the inevitable Allied invasion and battle for Germany, Hitler ordered Rommel out of Africa in March. ★

Richard Armstrong has written numerous military affairs articles for historical and professional journals and is the author of "Red Army Tank Commanders" and "Red Army Legacies."

Play It! Now you can experience one of World War II's most famous battles by playing the scenario "Supercharge: The Climactic Battle of El Alamein" in Matrix Games' *Steel Panthers: World at War* or by becoming part of the action in HPS's *El Alamein '42*. For more information and to find other titles depicting this battle, visit playit.armchairgeneral.com.

SPECIAL FEATURE

HOW HITLER COULD HAVE WON WORLD WAR II

A revealing look at how the Nazi dictator could have written a chilling alternate ending to history's most destructive war.

BY BEVIN ALEXANDER

Around 400 B.C., Sun Tzu, the great Chinese strategist and author of *The Art of War*, recorded what is perhaps the most profound sentence ever written about warfare: "The way to avoid what is strong is to strike what is weak." Although Adolf Hitler did not study Sun Tzu's works, the Nazi dictator followed an "indirect approach" strategy for the first seven years of his dictatorship (1933 to 1940), thereby achieving the stunning successes that brought him to the threshold of complete victory. In the summer of 1940, however, Hitler turned away from a policy of striking at weakness and began a fatal program of directly confronting the very heart of enemy strength. As much as any other factor, this policy caused the downfall of the "Thousand-year Reich" – and Hitler's own death – in only five years. Although Hitler's hubris thankfully saved the world from a nightmarish future, here's how he might have achieved his dark dream.

TOO MUCH, TOO SOON?

Hitler began to self-destruct on the heels of the greatest military victory in Germany's history. During just six weeks in 1940, Nazi armies overran the Low Countries, vanquished France, and threw Britain off the continent. On the strength of this triumph, Hitler decided that he

was an infallible military genius and that thereafter he would trust his *eingebung* (intuition) to lead Germany to total victory.

Hitler's conclusion demonstrated a bizarre, inverse-reasoning process. For the 1940 campaign in the West, he had approved a plan developed by a brilliant but lower-level general, Erich von Manstein. The daring operational concept Manstein created was directly at odds with the conservative plan proposed by Germany's top-ranking military brains, the elite General Staff.

The General Staff, now organized as the army high command or Oberkommando des Heeres (OKH), had not anticipated a quick victory over France and its British ally on the continent. Instead, the OKH had hoped merely to defeat a large portion of the Allied armies and thereby gain some territory in Holland, Belgium and northern France "for successful air and sea operations against Britain and as a broad protective zone for the Ruhr," Germany's industrial region east of Holland. By following Manstein's plan (see sidebar, page 77), Germany not only achieved the spectacular defeat of France but also exposed the OKH proposal as timid and inadequate.

Until he saw how well Manstein's plan worked, Hitler had typically deferred to the OKH in most matters. After all, the General Staff had dominated the German military since engineering victory in the Franco-



HUTTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS

Following his stunning victory over France, Adolf Hitler considered his own skills as a military strategist to be superior to those of his generals.

Hitler's obsession with the destruction of the Soviet Union and the elimination of all of Europe's Jews led him to override the counsel of his senior military commanders.



THE ART ARCHIVE

On the strength of the triumph over France, Hitler decided that he was an infallible military genius and that thereafter he would trust his intuition to lead Germany to total victory.

German Gen. Erich von Manstein developed the plan that brought quick victory over France and the Low Countries in 1940. Later, however, Manstein often was at odds with Hitler's military decisions and was eventually dismissed in March 1944.

Prussian War (1870-1871) and it was the "gold standard" that other countries' military staffs emulated. Hitler had been right to pick Manstein's plan over the OKH's; yet, henceforth, he scorned *all* German generals, determining that his own judgment was invariably superior to theirs. So much stunning success so early in the war proved to be "too much, too soon" for the man who assumed total control of Germany's war effort.

THE FÜHRER VS. THE GENERALS

Hitler's response was ultimately shortsighted. Regardless of how his generals had underestimated Germany's chances during the campaign in the West in 1940, their body of knowledge about warfare was far more vast than Hitler's and their inherent conservatism would be gravely needed in the campaigns that lay ahead.

Virtually every major military decision Hitler made thereafter was wrong. In fact, the only great strategic decision he *ever* made was to accept Manstein's brilliant



plan. Although Hitler was gifted in exploiting the weaknesses of his political opponents — especially their reluctance to risk war and their willingness to appease him — he could not successfully translate his political shrewdness into the military arena. In politics, Hitler's policy had been to strike at weakness. In war, his natural instinct was to strike headlong into his enemy's strength.

Trusting his intuition, Hitler turned away from an indirect course that, if left to his generals, could likely have led to victory.

Instead, he concentrated on two maniacal plans with which he had become obsessed since the 1920s: The destruction of bolshevism (i.e., the Soviet Union), and the murder of Europe's Jews and anyone who opposed him in any way. Although such schemes unarguably show Hitler's madness, he was likewise undeniably highly intelligent. Many of the generals who served the dictator believed they might tap into the sane part of his mind and deflect the mad part, and in this way lead Germany to a successful outcome. The intrigues in Hitler's headquarters throughout the war constituted an unfolding drama of this attempt. While a number of farsighted officers saw the way to succeed and tried to convince the führer, toadies catered to Hitler's prejudices. Most often, Hitler listened to no one but himself.

SPARING ENGLAND

Many believe that Hitler's primary goal after the fall of France was to conquer Britain. Evidence for this is the Battle of Britain, Germany's great aerial assault on southern England that erupted in earnest on August 13, 1940. Yet this is demonstrably not true. Hitler decided to turn his back on Britain and to attack Russia two weeks *before* the main assault on Britain commenced. On that day, he told his generals he was resolved to destroy "the vitality of Russia" in the spring of 1941.

Despite the epic collisions in the skies over Britain, it is doubtful whether Hitler ever intended to invade the island. He admired the British, offered to allow them to keep their empire, and believed they would "come to their senses" and make peace. In any event, Hitler cancelled plans for an invasion in the fall of 1940 and never contemplated it again.

His fixation on the Soviet Union at the expense of finishing off England aroused the opposition of a number of senior officers, including Alfred Jodl, chief of operations of the armed forces; Erich Raeder, commander of the German navy; and Major General Erwin Rommel, commander of the 7th Panzer Division. In the summer and fall of 1940, Jodl and other senior officers told Hitler on several occasions that it would be preferable to avoid a straight-ahead assault against the Soviet Union. Only Raeder, however, tried to convince him

June 23, 1940. Adolf Hitler poses at the Eiffel Tower following his victory over France.



Hitler had been right to pick Manstein's plan over the OKH's; yet, henceforth, he scorned *all* German generals, determining that his own judgment was invariably superior to theirs.

that an attack on Russia would be *disastrous*. Rommel came to the same conclusion in early 1941 but kept it to himself. The consensus among Hitler's generals and admirals was that, while attacking the Soviet Union was an unnecessary and risky undertaking, invading Russia while England still held out was inviting true catastrophe. Hitler simply ignored them.

THE MEDITERRANEAN "DOMINO"

Jodl, Raeder and Rommel realized that the way to victory was on the south shore of the Mediterranean – indeed, Winston Churchill and other senior British leaders acknowledged Britain's weakness in this region. A German panzer expert, General Wilhelm von Thoma, went to Libya in October 1940 and reported to Hitler that Suez could be captured with only four panzer divisions. At the time, Germany had 20 panzer divisions, and none was involved in active combat operations.

Hitler's highest-ranking officers saw a Mediterranean strategy as precipitating a "domino effect." If Britain lost Suez, the Royal Navy would retreat into the Red Sea because it would be unable to conduct resupply through the western Mediterranean. This would have transformed the great middle sea into an Axis lake. In turn, Germany would have taken French North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) and seized Dakar in Senegal on the west coast of Africa, from which submarines and aircraft could have dominated the main South Atlantic sea routes. With no hope of aid, Yugoslavia and Greece would have been compelled to come to terms. Since Hitler was already gaining the support of Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria through diplomatic means, Germany could have achieved control of all southeastern Europe without committing a single soldier to that fractured region.

Once Suez was taken, German panzers next could have overrun Palestine, Transjordan, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Iraq and Iran. This would have given Germany unlimited supplies of the one precious commodity it needed most – oil.

The German occupation of the Arab lands and Iran would have caused even more dominoes to fall: It would have isolated Turkey, threatened British control of India, and placed German tanks and guns within striking distance of the Soviet oil fields in the Caucasus and along the shores of the Caspian Sea. Turkey would have been forced to become Germany's ally or to grant transit rights to German forces, Britain would have had to exert all its strength to protect India, and Stalin would have gone to any lengths to preserve peace with Germany because of the Soviet Union's perilous position.

Germany need not have launched a U-boat or air



war against British shipping and cities because British participation in the war would have become increasingly irrelevant. Britain could never have built enough military power to invade the continent alone.

Without the added strength of the Soviet Union, the United States could not have projected sufficient power across the Atlantic Ocean to reconquer Europe by amphibious invasion in the face of an untouched German war machine. Since

the United States was increasingly preoccupied with the threat of Japan, it almost certainly would not have challenged Germany to a land war. Though Britain might have refused to make peace, a de facto cease-fire would have ensued. The United States would have concentrated on the defense of the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific.

Thus, after all the dominoes had fallen into place as a result of a successful Mediterranean strategy, Germany would have been left with a virtually invincible empire that exploited the resources of Europe, much of Africa, and all of the Middle East. To preserve peace, Stalin would have continued the U.S.S.R.'s prewar agreements to provide unlimited products from Russia and Southeast Asia. Germany would have had the leisure to develop defenses and war machines that, in time, would have rivaled those of the United States.

LOST VICTORIES

The effort to redirect Hitler's

LEFT: October 1938. A woman weeps as she salutes Hitler and his forces as they move into the Sudetenland.

TOP: September 1939. German troops parade through Warsaw, Poland. Despite the easy victory, the attack on Poland brought war with England and France.

CENTER: Hitler's obsession with eliminating Europe's Jews and other "undesirables" led to the murder of more than 10 million people.



December 29, 1940. During a German air raid, smoke and burning buildings surround St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Hitler's highest-ranking officers saw a Mediterranean strategy as precipitating a "domino effect."



NATIONAL ARCHIVES



NATIONAL ARCHIVES



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TOP: April 1943. A Russian mortar crew provides support for infantry attacking a German position.

CENTER: A German heavy artillery battery engages Russian targets during the 1942 summer campaign.

BOTTOM: July 1942. A Russian anti-tank gun provides fire support for an assault on a German-held village.

thinking to the Mediterranean theater began on June 30, 1940. On that day, Jodl proposed that if the strike across the English Channel did not come off, Egypt and the Suez Canal should be seized. If Germany's ally Italy could not do it alone, the Germans could help. Hitler did not respond, but Jodl's recommendation became urgent after July 31, 1940, when Germany's senior generals and admirals learned that Hitler was determined to attack Russia in 1941. Almost at once, Walther von Brauchitsch, commander in chief of the army, and Franz Halder, chief of staff of the OKH, proposed sending an "expeditionary corps" of panzer forces to Libya, along with aircraft to help the Italians who were planning an offensive into Egypt.

Hitler ignored this proposal. He was interested in only one project in the Mediterranean, a preposterous idea that he had conceived on his own. By direct assault through Spain, he planned to capture the British base of Gibraltar, the "cork in the bottle" at the western end of

the Mediterranean. Unable to divert Hitler from this mad scheme, the generals sent Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of the Abwehr (the military counterintelligence service) to Madrid to hear the reaction of the Spanish fascist dictator Francisco Franco.

Franco, quite sensibly, wanted nothing to do with the plan since it would have required Spain to enter the war – a move certain to bring disaster. In the event of war, the British would surely seize the Spanish Canary Islands off the northwestern coast of Africa and cut off vital Spanish food imports from Argentina and other Western Hemisphere countries.

It may be telling that, although Franco seemed the least impressive of the fascist dictators, the little Spaniard ruled Spain for 40 years – outlasting fellow dictators Hitler and Mussolini by decades – by never directly confronting the major world powers.

The Gibraltar scheme convinced Raeder that Hitler had very little concept of military grand strategy and must be talked into a more sensible policy. He spoke to the führer on two occasions, September 6 and 26, 1940. At the second conference, he isolated Hitler from his toadies and proceeded to show him step by step how Germany could win a commanding position against the Soviet Union without directly attacking the communist

giant. He said Germany must occupy French North Africa, but the main target had to be Suez. After capturing Suez, he told Hitler, German panzers could advance quickly through Palestine and Syria to the Turkish frontier. "If we reach that point, Turkey will be in our power," Raeder emphasized. "The Russian problem will then appear in a different light. It is doubtful whether an advance against Russia from the north [that is, from Poland, the Baltics and Romania] will be necessary."

In other words, Raeder laid out the precise strategy Hitler *could have* used to win the war. With German forces threatening the Soviet oil fields, Russia would be in Germany's power. Britain, forced to use all its strength to hold the home islands while also defending its crown colonial jewel, India, would be rendered impotent.

Hitler agreed to Raeder's "general trend of thought," but on February 6, 1941, finally decided to send only one panzer division and a small light division to Libya under Rommel. This exposed the dictator's true motive, which was not to achieve victory but rather to keep Mussolini in the war. Raeder realized that Hitler would not entertain indirect approaches to his objectives; rather he was only interested in dangerous, straight-ahead plunges.

Raeder received but limited help from the top generals in his efforts to convince the führer. Although Brauchitsch, Halder, Jodl and Wilhelm Keitel, chief of staff of the armed forces high command, all advised Hitler to send troops, tanks and planes to North Africa, their half-hearted proposals lacked Raeder's urgency. The generals' hesitancy lay in the knowledge that Hitler had been fixated for a long time on a direct assault against the Soviet Union – their careers, perhaps their very lives, depended on not rocking that boat.

Hitler remained focused on his headlong goal even after Rommel, with only a few elements of his two divisions yet in Africa, shut two British divisions into the port of Tobruk and drove the remainder out of Libya in March and early April 1941. Despite such success, Hitler refused to give Rommel the two additional panzer divisions he needed to capture Suez, trading minor battlefield success for the "lost victories" that could otherwise have won the war.

DISASTROUS INVASION

Hitler still might have gained a victory without Suez if he had entered the Soviet Union as a liberator in June 1941. The Soviet people had suffered enormously at the hands of the communist autocracy, particularly in non-Russian areas like the western Ukraine. Millions had died when the Reds forced people off their land to create collective farms, and millions more were obliged to move great distances and work long hours under appalling conditions in factories and construction projects. The secret police punished any resistance with

BETTMANN CORBIS

With Gen. Alfred Jodl peering over his right shoulder, Adolf Hitler points out information on an operational map to Gen. Walther von Brauchitsch (right) in July 1940.



Hitler refused to give Rommel the two additional panzer divisions he needed to capture Suez, trading minor battlefield success for the “lost victories” that could otherwise have won the war.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

German 150 mm howitzers bombard Tobruk's Australian defenders in 1941. Hitler had several options available to him that might have secured the entire Mediterranean region.

After France fell in June 1940, Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler faced his greatest challenge – how to win the war. A number of strategic options were available; however, he chose not to capitalize on them.

death or transportation to horrible prison gulags in Siberia. In the 1930s, Joseph Stalin had killed all leaders and military officers who, in his deranged mind, posed the slightest threat to his dictatorship.

Given this history of repression, vast numbers of Soviet citizens likely would have flocked to Hitler's side. A policy emphasizing libera-

tion may not have immediately given Hitler the *Lebensraum* (living space for the German people) that he coveted in the East; however, once the military and political strength of the Soviet Union had been shattered, he could have done anything he desired with the pieces that remained.

Yet Hitler proved unable to overcome his paranoia, even for a limited time and even at the cost of victory. His personal mental demons overwhelmed his political sense and cancelled out what could have been a successful indirect strategy. Hitler went into the Soviet Union as a brutal conqueror, killed every Communist Party member he could find, shot or starved prisoners of war by the tens of thousands, refused to make any plans to feed the Russian population, and sent in *einsatzgruppen* (extermination detachments) to murder Jews and countless others. These monstrous actions generated

intense loathing and unyielding resistance that led directly to Germany's defeat in the East.

FATAL FLAWS

Hitler's incapacity became increasingly crippling as the war progressed. He repeatedly made disastrous strategic decisions, always over the objections of his generals. For instance, he refused to assault Malta, located only 60 miles south of Sicily, although British aircraft and submarines operating out of the island wreaked havoc on supply ships heading out to Libya. Instead, he seized Crete, which possessed virtually no strategic importance. He stopped the advance on Moscow in late summer 1941 in order to encircle a large Russian army around Kiev. This delayed the Moscow drive, causing it to collapse in bitter cold and Red Army counterattacks in December and ending any chance for the destruction of the Soviet state. He diverted too much army strength to the seizure of Stalingrad in 1942 when his real aim was to capture the oil fields of the Caucasus. By dividing his forces between two objectives, he was unable to achieve either goal and doomed the German army to defeat.

Erich von Manstein, who conducted many campaigns in Russia, came to have wide personal experience with Hitler's philosophy on war. Despite the dictator's recklessness regarding grand strategy, Manstein concluded that, at the operational level, Hitler “actually



Had Hitler shown more regard for the indirect approach that had brought him such early political success, the history of World War II – and therefore of the world – would have sunk into “the new Dark Ages.”

How Hitler DID Win – Against France, Anyway

Erich von Manstein’s plan for the 1940 invasion of the Low Countries and France proposed that the main weight of the German attack be shifted from north and central Belgium – a route easily predictable to the Allies, given the strong French Maginot Line defenses – to the Ardennes, the heavily forested region of low mountains in eastern Belgium and northern Luxembourg. Manstein advocated that the vast bulk of Germany’s tank strength be concentrated there to press through to the Meuse River at Sedan, cross it before a substantial French defense could be set up, and then turn *westward* and drive through virtually undefended territory to the Channel.

The “trump card” for this offensive was a radical new military system that Germany had developed over the preceding seven years – 10 panzer (tank) divisions and the Stuka dive-bomber, which functioned as aerial artillery. Heinz Guderian, a low-ranking general, developed the panzers and built the armored arm on the teachings of J.E.C. Fuller and Basil H. Liddell Hart. These two English experts’ ideas of concentrating armor – and motorized infantry, artillery and engineers – into large, highly mobile units had mostly been ignored in Britain. Hitler’s prescient enthusiasm for tanks gave Guderian the opening to establish the army doctrine of putting all armor into panzer divisions rather than dividing it into small detachments and parceling it out to infantry divisions, as remained the practice in the French and British armies.

Erwin Rommel, who commanded the premier breakthrough unit in 1940 and later gained fame as the “Desert Fox” in North Africa, produced the best one-sentence description of panzer or blitzkrieg warfare: “The art of concentrating strength at one point, forcing a breakthrough, rolling up and securing the flanks on either side, and then penetrating like lightning deep into his rear, before the enemy has had time to react.”

It was a new way to win battles, and in 1940, the Allies had nothing to match it. Manstein’s plan worked to perfection. Britain was thrown off the continent and France surrendered in only six weeks.

Hitler, however, appropriated the victory as his own, using it to justify an unearned reputation as a “brilliant military strategist.”



recoiled from risks in the military field.” A prime example was his insistence that the Germans hold all gained territory. Hitler could not see that in the wide reaches of Russia the enemy could always mass forces at one point and break through. Only in mobile operations could superior German training and skills be exploited. Manstein also found that Hitler feared to denude secondary fronts to gain superiority at the point where a decisive outcome was bound to occur. For instance, he refused to assemble a large force to relieve Stalingrad, leading to the loss of the entire German Sixth Army.

Manstein’s concluding judgment was damning: “Obstinate defense of every foot of ground gradually became the be-all and end-all of Hitler’s leadership. Hitler thought the arcanum of success lay in clinging at all costs to what he already possessed.”

The world can be grateful that Hitler was never convinced to renounce this notion and that he was apparently incapable of conceiving any plan but direct confrontation. For it was on these two fatal flaws that the Allies built a strategy that ultimately destroyed both the man and the criminal Nazi state he created. Had Hitler shown less hubris and more regard for the indirect approach that had brought him such early political success, the history of World War II – and therefore of the world – would have sunk into, as Winston Churchill warned in 1940, “the new Dark Ages.” ★

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Lost Opportunity: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and officers of Germany’s Afrika Korps meet during the 1941-1942 campaign in the North African desert. Hitler ignored advice to reinforce the “Desert Fox” with enough troops and materiel to conquer Egypt and seize the Suez Canal, Britain’s life line to its Asian empire. A Nazi victory in the Mediterranean might have won Hitler the Middle East and changed the course of the war.

HISTORY IN DEPTH

THE
“Odd
Couple”
PLUS
ONE

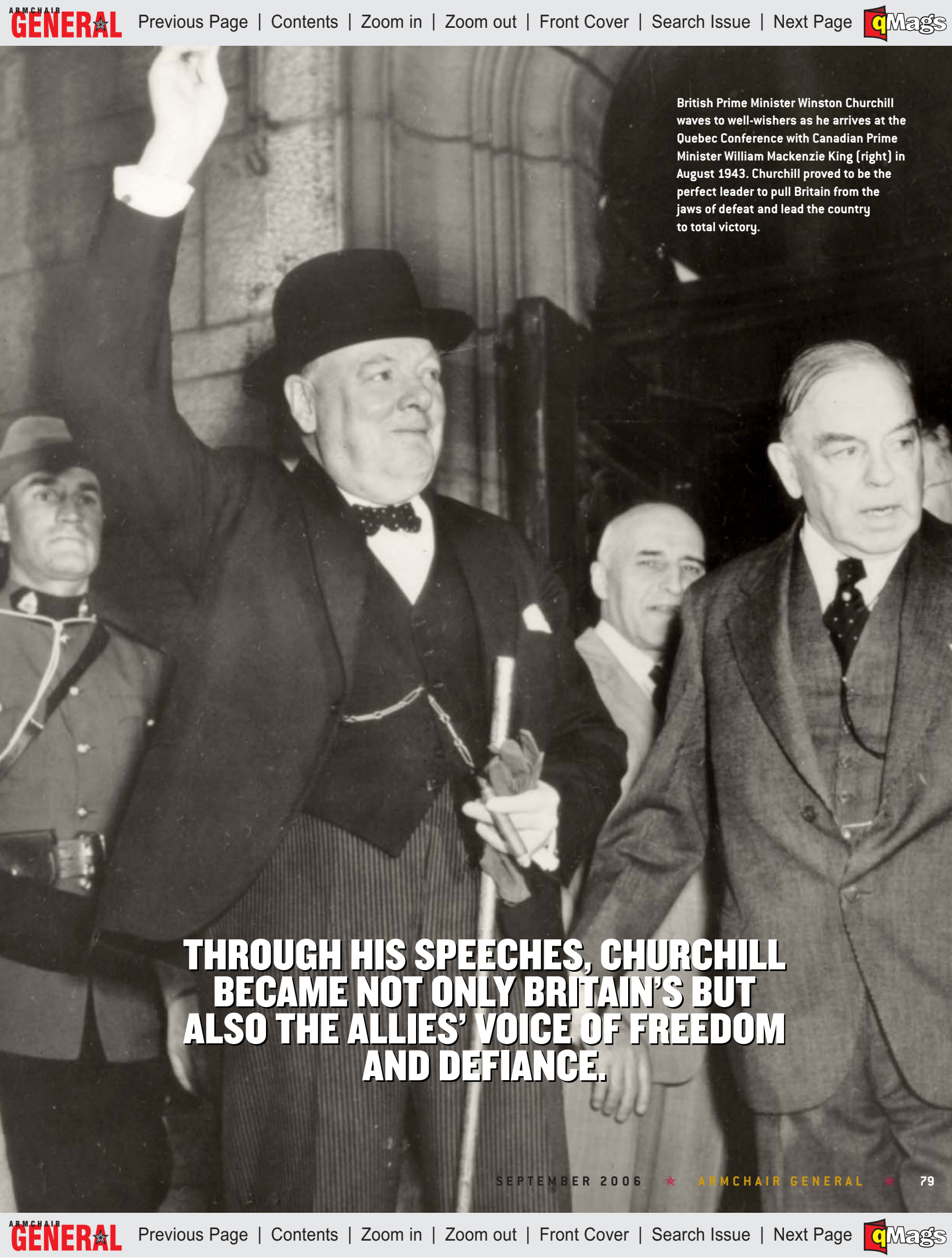
Churchill, FDR and Stalin

HISTORIANS
EXAMINE HOW
THE ALLIED
“BIG THREE”
LED THEIR
NATIONS TO
VICTORY.

It would have been difficult to assemble three more disparate men to lead Allied forces to victory over Hitler’s Germany and Imperial Japan in World War II. America’s Franklin D. Roosevelt was a patrician, a master politician and media manipulator who could charm even his enemies. Winston Churchill, Britain’s prime minister, also came from the “ruling classes” but was considered in 1939 to be a failed politician who had reached his peak in 1915 as First Lord of the Admiralty. The Soviet Union’s Joseph Stalin was a Georgian peasant and political revolutionary, a former bank robber, terrorist and political prisoner who managed to secure total dictatorial control of Russia through guile, treachery and murder. The Big Three were perhaps the original “odd couple ... plus one.”

Yet, united by common enemies, these men managed to forge an unprecedented grand alliance that saved Europe from the madness of Nazism and destroyed Japan’s brutal colonial empire in the Pacific. As much as anyone during the turbulent 20th century, the Big Three created the world in which we live today.

How they managed to do this is an insightful lesson in leadership.



British Prime Minister Winston Churchill waves to well-wishers as he arrives at the Quebec Conference with Canadian Prime Minister William Mackenzie King (right) in August 1943. Churchill proved to be the perfect leader to pull Britain from the jaws of defeat and lead the country to total victory.

**THROUGH HIS SPEECHES, CHURCHILL
BECAME NOT ONLY BRITAIN'S BUT
ALSO THE ALLIES' VOICE OF FREEDOM
AND DEFIANCE.**

HISTORY IN DEPTH

Churchill, the Allies' Voice of Freedom

BY CARLO D'ESTE

During the 1930s, Britain's maverick politician Winston Churchill repeatedly warned his colleagues in parliament about the rise of Nazi Germany and the threat posed by Hitler. Successive British governments largely ignored – even ridiculed – him, yet he stubbornly refused to be silenced. On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, sparking the outbreak of World War II and proving that Churchill's prescient warnings were well founded.

On September 3, Britain responded to Hitler by declaring war on Germany. That day was doubly historic because it also marked Churchill's return to a cabinet office after more than a decade in the political wilderness.

As First Lord of the Admiralty (September 1939 to May 10, 1940), Churchill served as Britain's unofficial warlord, tirelessly suggesting various strategies and military operations and urging his boss, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, to strike back at Hitler. However, Churchill's zeal led to a militarily disastrous campaign in Norway (April - May 1940) for which Chamberlain took the blame. He was compelled to resign on May 10 – the same day Hitler invaded the West – and Winston Churchill became Britain's new prime minister. The next few desperate months would demonstrate that Churchill was the right man in the right place at the right time.

At the age of 66 – a time when most men are retired – Churchill faced the most difficult challenge ever undertaken by a British political leader: He had to save his nation from what seemed certain defeat. Originally regarded as an emergency prime minister who would likely be replaced within three months, Churchill managed to win over his numerous critics who believed he was an unpredictable, dangerously amateur strategist who had caused both the World War I Dardanelles disaster and the Norway fiasco in 1940.

Churchill not only survived but also prospered as Britain's war leader. Three days after becoming prime minister, he dramatically offered his countrymen only "blood, toil, tears and sweat," and in early June 1940 he announced to the world that Britain would never give in to German tyranny. "We shall fight on the beaches. ... We shall never surrender" was his most famous speech, and it galvanized his nation to survive and ultimately to triumph. His soaring rhetoric was mesmerizing. It rallied the courage of his countrymen and – importantly – convinced his future Allies in America that Britain would indeed hold out. Through his speeches, Churchill became not only Britain's but also the Allies' voice of freedom and defiance.

One of Churchill's earliest and most significant decisions during World War II was to appoint himself minister of defense. In effect, he

became the commander in chief of the armed forces and Britain's warlord. His extensive service in the military and his "real war" experience clearly made him the best-qualified politician to take charge of the effort. He was not only his country's political and military leader but also its chief morale builder.

Churchill deeply inserted himself into military affairs and attempted to orchestrate a strategy to preserve the British Empire. That effort, however, proved largely unsuccessful. To his credit, he never once overruled his chiefs of staff when they said no, and he largely left the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force alone – but Army generals who displeased him were sacked and replaced with men of his choosing.

Some senior British military leaders, such as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke (a Churchill appointee), were driven to distraction by Churchill's constant suggestions – what some called meddling – but his gadfly-like prodding helped keep pressure on German forces in every possible region. Although the relationship between Churchill and Brooke was stormy and often contentious, Brooke loyally served him in the same capacity that George Marshall served Franklin D. Roosevelt, as chief military advisor and strategist.

Churchill well understood that Britain could not defeat Hitler without the involvement of the United States. He and FDR exchanged messages almost daily and met frequently. The two men forged a partnership that became the cornerstone of the Allied cause, upon which was built the alliance that won the war.

Unlike FDR, Churchill had a hand in every aspect of the war, and from his desk came a steady stream of amazing ideas for advancements in weaponry and technology. He also unleashed the combined bomber offensive that began in 1943, which reduced most of Germany's major cities to ashes. Although the tactic has since been widely debated and often criticized, Churchill at the time deemed it both necessary and a matter of retribution.

The third member of the Big Three, Joseph Stalin, was an uneasy partner who lied and schemed at every turn. Although Churchill supported Stalin and provided aid to Russia in its darkest hour after the 1941 German invasion, he never trusted him. The mistrust, however, was mutual, particularly since during the Russian Civil War (1918-1920) Churchill led the British effort to support the anti-Communist White Army forces and "strangle bolshevism in its cradle." Churchill's doubts were eventually validated – at Yalta, Stalin made promises about the shape of postwar Europe and then broke them almost immediately after V-E Day, dropping what Churchill later called an "Iron Curtain" over East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the rest of Eastern Europe.

As the war progressed and U.S. and Soviet armies became the predominant forces fighting the Axis, Churchill found himself increasingly relegated to the role of junior partner in the Big Three. Yet he adjusted his diplomatic tactics to account for the shift in relative power and never stopped his vigorous protection of British interests.

He remained Britain's champion at Big Three conferences until midway through the 1945 Potsdam Conference when the nationwide general election in Britain rejected his Tory Party and he was replaced as prime minister by Clement Atlee. The political loss was a disappointing blow to the man who had led Britain through six long years of war and who had been the Free World's most enduring symbol of bulldog determination and fighting spirit. Nonetheless, "Winston is back!" would be heard once more when Churchill became prime minister again in 1951.

Today, World War II's Big Three are still well remembered through countless books, studies and films that regularly recount the lives and achievements of these remarkable wartime leaders. Yet only one can claim the distinction of still having worldwide organ-

izations dedicated to the study and celebration of his life, leadership and accomplishments. To date, there is no FDR counterpart to the International Churchill Society and its American branch, the Churchill Centre in Washington, D.C. – and one for Stalin would be unthinkable, even in his native country. Indeed, when the Global War on Terrorism began, no president or prime minister sought to rally his countrymen with references to the World War II leadership of Franklin Roosevelt or Joseph Stalin. Only the great orator Winston Churchill can claim that honor.

Carlo D'Este, best-selling biographer of "Patton: A Genius for War" and "Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life," is Consulting Historian for ARMCHAIR GENERAL and a member of the magazine's advisory board. His biography of Winston Churchill is scheduled to be published in 2007.

FDR, Hands-Off but With an Iron Will

BY BRIAN M. SOBEL

On December 8, 1941, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, his voice resonant with righteous anger, addressed a joint session of Congress. However, by the time he delivered his "a date which will live in infamy" speech, the lawmakers and every other American already knew that December 7 – at long last – had brought the United States into World War II.

Yet FDR had been maneuvering for years to nudge American industry and military forces toward a war footing. Indeed, long before the Japanese attack, he and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met secretly (Atlantic Conference, August 1940) and agreed upon war goals and a framework for future U.S.-British cooperation when America – inevitably, in FDR's mind – entered the war. The meeting launched their personal friendship, one that subsequently facilitated a close working relationship between their nations' military staffs and that became a key to the success of their wartime alliance.

Stalin was eventually brought into this partnership, after which the men became known as the Big Three. Although the Soviet dictator was never as close to FDR as Churchill, the American president used his famous "Roosevelt charm" on Uncle Joe to make the alliance work as smoothly as possible.

Months before the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy entered the shooting war in the Atlantic, escorting British convoys and occasionally exchanging fire with Nazi U-boats. Moreover, Lend-Lease (and its predecessor, Cash and Carry) – a bit of FDR "smoke and mirrors" devised to get around America's Neutrality Act restrictions – had been providing Britain with the means to stay in the war since shortly after it began. When Adolf Hitler rashly declared war on the U.S. in the days following Pearl Harbor, the Lend-Lease "hose"

was turned toward Stalin's Russia as well.

As a result of FDR's institution of America's first-ever peacetime draft, U.S. military strength had risen to over 1 million (in the interwar years, the Army had bottomed out at a pathetic 150,000). In the wake of the Army's 1941 Louisiana Maneuvers, the brilliant and energetic Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall (appointed by FDR in September 1939) used the wargame's results to rid the Army of "dead weight" senior commanders. He replaced them with sharper, younger officers – like Dwight D. Eisenhower.

After the Japanese attack, its architect, Admiral Yamamoto, expressed the fear that it had woken "a sleeping giant." Yet thanks to FDR, the "giant" of American industrial and military might had already been stirring. Naval shipyards and aircraft factories were well into massive building programs long before Japan delivered its December 7 wake-up call.

The long-held impression that before December 7, 1941, the United States sat idly on the war's sidelines in total isolationism and completely unprepared is largely a myth. The man who in 1940 had solemnly promised the mothers of America "your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars" had been carefully preparing his country to do just that since Hitler's tanks rolled into Poland in 1939.

FDR's wartime leadership was much like that of a corporate CEO. He assembled a winning team, gathered data and resources, solicited opinions and options, and then assigned missions to people within their areas of expertise. From early 1942 until 1945, he received military briefings at least once, and often twice, a day in a White House basement office styled after Churchill's underground war room, featuring large area maps that depicted troop movements and naval advances with colored pins.

While Roosevelt – unlike Churchill and Stalin – was reluctant to interfere in operational decisions, he had strong opinions and kept close tabs on the armed services' competing interests in the different theaters of war. Although FDR was frequently the "referee" when conflicts arose,

HISTORY IN DEPTH

he more often finessed a solution *before* it could become a problem – such as when he placed Lend-Lease under the Treasury Department in early 1941 because he realized (correctly) that the military branches would balk at hamstringing their own training efforts in order to send precious weapons, ammunition and equipment to America's Allies.

Naturally, each theater commander felt his own area of responsibility was the most important of the war. Yet Roosevelt had to refuse the temptation to micromanage each situation, instead allowing Marshall and others on the Joint Chiefs of Staff to sort things out. Sometimes – to the irritation of senior commanders – FDR would refuse to make a final decision on questions of military strategy, preferring instead to let events proceed until the issue solved itself without his intervention.

The most famous instance of such an FDR “nondecision” was his involvement (or lack thereof) in the question of which line of advance American forces should take in the Pacific: General Douglas MacArthur's proposed route via the Philippines, or Admiral Chester Nimitz's Central Pacific thrust to Formosa. The three men met at Pearl Harbor in July 1944 to discuss the issue. Despite MacArthur later promoting the impression that the president had approved his plan, FDR had done no such thing. Instead, he avoided making a final decision until events rendered it unnecessary (logistical constraints coupled with China's failure to secure bases took Formosa out of the running).

This hands-off leadership approach was at times frustrating to his military chieftains, but it suited the politically savvy FDR to a tee. And if his uniformed leaders became too cranky, he simply applied a little of the Roosevelt charm and they typically came around.

Despite his frail health and paralysis (he contracted polio in 1921), FDR met with Churchill 11 times, often traveling great distances to the meeting site. Additionally, he met twice with Stalin – at Tehran in

1943 and at Yalta in 1945 – as part of a trilateral conference that included Churchill. FDR was masterful in helping to manage the sometimes competing objectives of the Americans, the British and the Russians, and he was genuinely liked by both Stalin and Churchill (who disliked and mistrusted each other).

During the war years, FDR knew that communication with the ordinary American was important. As he had during the Depression, he often used radio broadcasts of his famous “fireside chats” to boost home front morale and to inspire even greater effort from those churning out the arms, equipment and war materiel fueling the Allied victory. He was a master communicator who deftly manipulated the public to maintain support for his wartime policies and strategy.

In November 1944, Roosevelt was elected to an unprecedented fourth term. However, after years of fighting his own disability along with the trials and travails of a world war, it was apparent that his health had taken a dramatic turn for the worse. His appearance at the February 1945 Yalta Conference shocked those in attendance, as it did Congress when he addressed the legislators after his return.

On April 12, 1945, FDR died at Warm Springs, Georgia. He did not live to see the end of the war and total victory in Europe or the final defeat of Japan. His legacy is that of the American war leader who commanded

the largest military and industrial buildup in world history and whose “hidden-hand” leadership manipulated the forces that defeated enemies on six continents and on the oceans of the globe.

Brian M. Sobel, president of Sobel Communications, is a frequent contributor to magazines, an on-air political and military analyst, and author of “The Fighting Pattons.”

**THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT
USED HIS FAMOUS
“ROOSEVELT CHARM” ON
UNCLE JOE TO MAKE
THE ALLIANCE WORK AS
SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE.**

Stalin, the Most Powerful Man in the World

BY JERRY D. MORELOCK

Until the early morning hours of June 22, 1941 – the moment of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa launch – Joseph Vissarionovich Djughashvili, better known as Stalin, was the most powerful human being in the world. With his Georgian boot firmly planted on the neck of the Soviet Union, the 5-foot-4-inch dictator with the pock-marked face and crippled left arm wielded more personal power than did Nazi leader Adolf Hitler or

Japanese emperor Hirohito. Stalin's soon-to-be Allies, Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill and America's President Franklin D. Roosevelt, could only fantasize about how smoothly their war machines and economies might be managed by having such complete control of all aspects of their respective democracies. Even Hitler could not murder his senior military commanders on a whim – yet Stalin could, and already had.

January 20, 1945.
Roosevelt delivers
his fourth inaugural
address.

**THIS HANDS-OFF LEADERSHIP APPROACH
WAS AT TIMES FRUSTRATING TO HIS
MILITARY CHIEFTAINS, BUT IT SUITED THE
POLITICALLY SAVVY FDR TO A TEE.**

HISTORY IN DEPTH

But once the powerful Nazi attack had slashed deeply into Stalin's Soviet empire, and particularly after the stunning defeats inflicted on the Red Army in the first six months of the Russo-German War, subtle yet noticeable changes occurred. Unlike Hitler, who continued to meddle in military operations and insinuate himself – often disastrously – into all phases of Nazi Germany's war planning, the Red dictator increasingly deferred judgment in the prosecution of the war to his best senior commanders such as Vasilevsky and Zhukov. Although Stalin never completely relinquished control of Russia's military effort – the crafty Georgian always maintained the final say in any operation – he permitted his successful commanders a degree of leeway that would have been unthinkable before the German invasion. For example, the shouting matches Zhukov sometimes engaged in with the *vozhd* ("boss" Stalin) would have quickly earned him a bullet in the back of the neck or a one-way ticket to the gulag in the prewar years. Stalin, however, grudgingly tolerated the wartime outbursts of the quick-tempered but brilliant Zhukov and only exiled the much too popular "Marshal Victory" after the war was safely won.

Still, Stalin's leadership of the Soviet war effort distinctly differed from that of his democratic Allies. Roosevelt, for instance, would never have wished to possess the degree of control that Stalin wielded. FDR was a hands-off leader who hated to make final decisions, seldom gave specific advice to military commanders, and often deferred crucial questions until circumstances made his intervention unnecessary.

Churchill, on the other hand, likely would have relished having Stalin's power, yet he lacked the totalitarian political system that would have made it possible. The prime minister constantly inserted himself into military operations, attempted to push his commanders to undertake what many felt to be harebrained schemes, and frequently pestered Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower with unwanted advice. The memoirs of Britain's Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke, are peppered with uncensored criticism of Churchill's wartime meddling and disdain for his military amateurism.

It is perhaps revealing that Stalin liked and trusted his polar opposite, Roosevelt, while he viewed the more like-minded Churchill as a scheming anti-Bolshevik who hated and feared Communist Russia more than Nazi Germany.

In their personal and diplomatic relations – the Big Three met face-to-face only twice, at the Tehran Conference (1943) and at the Yalta Conference (1945) – Stalin held an edge over the other two. His greatest leverage stemmed from the fact that Russia bore the lion's share of the fighting in the war against Hitler (a material "plus") and suffered unprecedented military and civilian casualties as a result (a moral "plus"). The terrible casualty figures weighed particularly heavily on FDR, who seemed apt to excuse any Soviet recalcitrance in the diplomatic arena because of the great suffering of the Russian people,

while Churchill followed his nation's traditional pattern of jealously guarding Britain's "interests" by deferring to Stalin mainly because of Russia's overwhelming military contribution to the Allied war effort.

Stalin held other advantages beyond the moral and immediate material ones – for example, his promise to consider employing Russian manpower in the war against Japan, and his unscrupulous spying on his Allies by shamelessly bugging FDR's and Churchill's quarters at the Tehran and Yalta conferences.

However, the Soviet espionage effort went far beyond merely listening in on private conversations. With agents embedded in American and British government and military organizations since the 1930s, Stalin had access to his Allies' greatest secrets – including the Manhattan Project, America's atomic bomb development effort. Red agents like Britain's "Cambridge spies" and the American traitors Harry Dexter White, Alger Hiss, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg provided Stalin with valuable information about what his erstwhile Allied counterparts were really thinking. Even Harry Hopkins, FDR's most trusted adviser, apparently passed along to "Uncle Joe" the contents of secret Roosevelt-Churchill communications. FDR and Churchill's wartime relations with Stalin were akin to a poker game in which the dictator knew exactly which cards the other players held. It was the only way Stalin liked to play.

Stalin's attempts to get the Western Allies to open a second front in the war consumed his diplomatic efforts prior to June 6, 1944. Little concerned for the Red Army's horrific casualty figures, he was disdainful of what he considered the Allies' too high regard for husbanding their own troops. Realizing that the only way to defeat Nazi Germany was to confront its armed forces directly, he was impatient with his counterparts' foot dragging. Churchill's efforts to convince him that the early Allied bomber offensive against Ger-

many constituted the promised second front were met with open ridicule. Likewise, the Mediterranean invasions – North Africa, Sicily and Italy – in 1942 and 1943 produced only mocking comments from Stalin, who claimed that Churchill seemed afraid to fight the Germans. Once his Allies finally landed on continental Europe, however, Stalin's main concern shifted from badgering them about the second front to ensuring that the Soviet Union's sphere of influence was extended as far as possible into Central Europe before the Allied armies could get there. He was delighted therefore in April 1945 when Eisenhower decided not to launch U.S. forces in an effort to capture Berlin before the arrival of the Red Army.

Of course, no Soviet commander would have had the authority to pass up the war's main political prize – and had one attempted it at that late stage, with the war virtually won and control of Stalin's empire once again secure, the Russian dictator would have felt safe in resuming his practice of shooting Red Army senior officers. ★

Jerry D. Morelock, PhD, is Editor in Chief for ARMCHAIR GENERAL.

Stalin's Parable – Eastern Europe's Fate

After the Big Three's February 1945 Yalta Conference deliberations, Stalin used a parable to explain to his Kremlin cronies how the Soviet Union ended up with all of Eastern Europe at the end of World War II. He said, "Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin went hunting. They finally killed their bear. Churchill said, 'I'll take the bearskin. Let Roosevelt and Stalin divide the meat.' Roosevelt said, 'No, I'll take the skin. Let Churchill and Stalin divide the meat.' Stalin remained silent, so Churchill and Roosevelt asked him, 'Mister Stalin, what do you say?' Stalin simply replied, 'The bear belongs to me – after all, I killed it.'"

EVEN HITLER COULD NOT MURDER HIS SENIOR MILITARY COMMANDERS ON A WHIM – YET STALIN COULD, AND ALREADY HAD.



Stalin returns the salute of a British color guard at Potsdam in July 1945. Paranoid and distrusting by nature, Stalin allowed his successful military commanders to run the war but reserved the final say on every major operation. Thus, he wielded powers that his Allied counterparts could only dream of.

BATTLEFIELD LEADER

MONTY

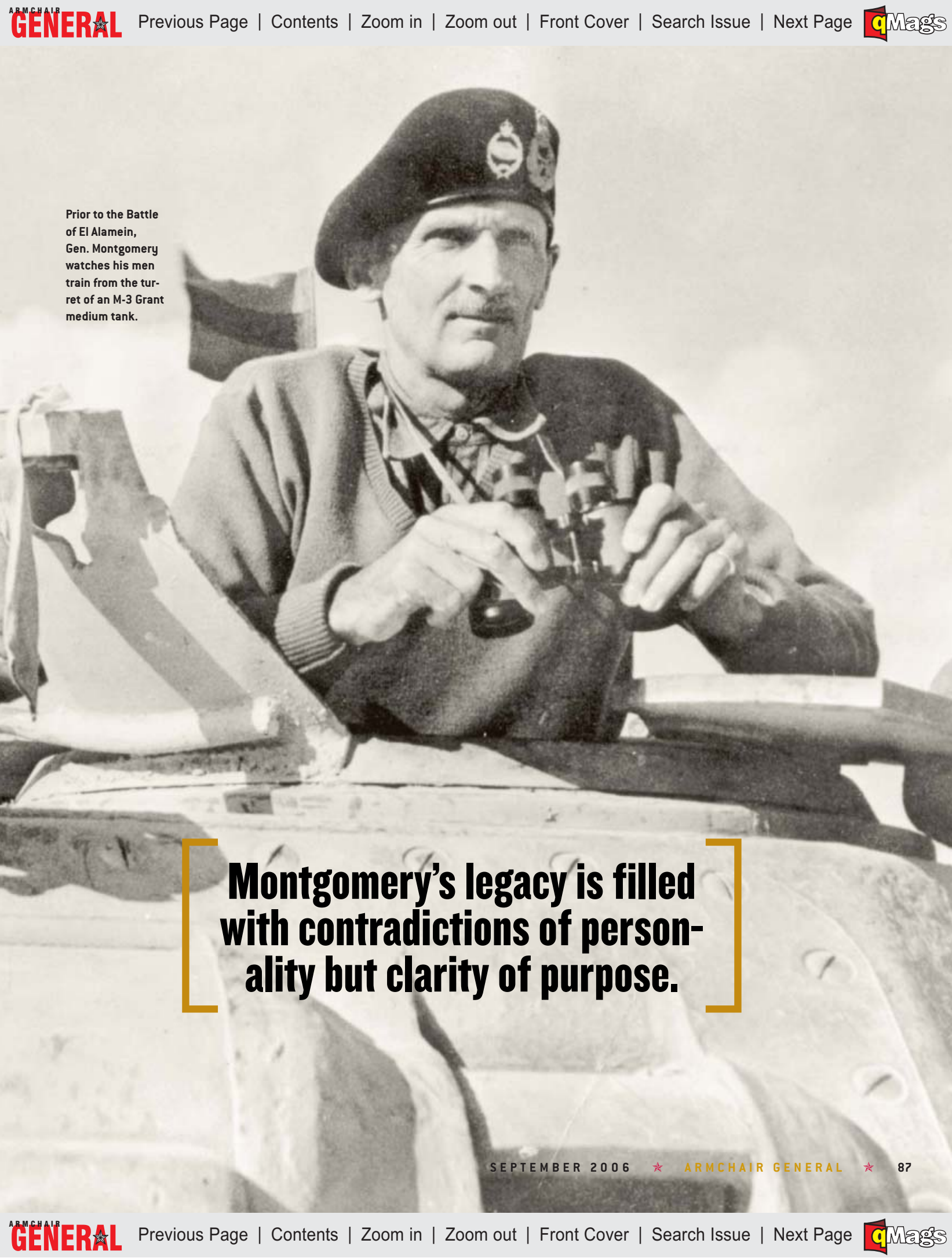
Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery,
hero of El Alamein and World War II,
was a tactically and strategically gifted 20th-
century warrior. Yet his outrageous ego
often made it difficult for others to like him.

BY BRIAN SOBEL

On January 7, 1945, while the Battle of the Bulge was still underway, Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, commander of all Allied forces in the northern half of the Bulge area since December 21, held a press conference. Although conceived with good intentions – Monty stated that its purpose was “to put in a strong plea for Allied solidarity” – it turned out to be a disaster. When he told the press, “The battle has been most interesting; I think possibly one of the most interesting and tricky battles I have ever handled,” the diminutive field marshal gave the impression that he alone had won the greatest battle ever fought by American Soldiers. And when he claimed, “I employed the whole available power of the British Group of Armies,” U.S. military leaders were furious. After all, their troops had done most of the fighting and dying (U.S. casualties totaled over 80,000 while British losses were about 1,400). Later in his approximately 1,000-word statement, Montgomery acknowledged that the German attack “was really beaten by the good fighting qualities of the American Soldier” and he ended with praise for Allied teamwork. But the damage was done. American commanders were incensed, especially the man Monty called “the captain of our team,” Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

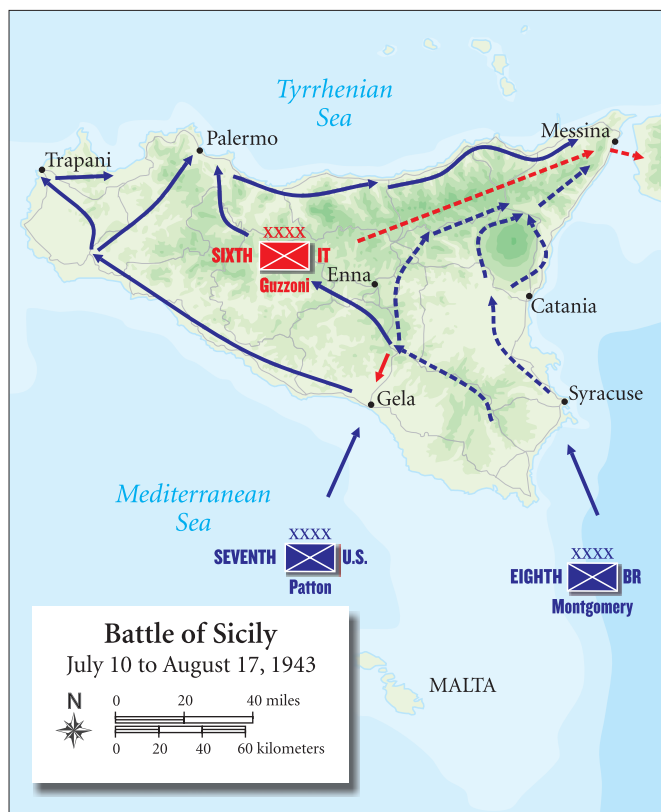


Prior to the Battle of El Alamein, Gen. Montgomery watches his men train from the turret of an M-3 Grant medium tank.

Montgomery's legacy is filled with contradictions of personality but clarity of purpose.

Monty continued to pester Ike on the ground command issue. Eisenhower, however, ended

BATTLEFIELD LEADER



Montgomery's drive on Messina with the Eighth British Army, supported by Patton's Seventh U.S. Army, sparked a race with the flamboyant American.

Montgomery later wrote that the press conference “was probably a mistake” and concluded, “I think now that I should never have held [it].” His British bosses agreed. Prime Minister Winston Churchill felt it necessary to mend Allied fences by addressing parliament, emphasizing that the Bulge had been “an American battle” and citing the great disparity in casualty figures. Monty’s military superior, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Alan Brooke had a late-night session with Churchill in which they “discussed all the evils of Monty’s press interview.” The conversation precipitated conciliatory calls to Eisenhower and an apologetic cable to President Franklin Roosevelt. Not even the outrageously outspoken General George S. Patton had ever uttered public statements that damaged U.S.-British relations as severely as did Monty’s press conference remarks.

The incident, however, seems emblematic of Montgomery's performance as an Allied commander. The truth behind his comments was that he had indeed brought much-needed order and organization to the battlefield situation that existed on December 21 when Ike gave him emergency command over American units. First U.S. Army commander, General Courtney Hodges, was a physical wreck who had lost touch with what was taking place in the forests of the Ardennes, and his staff was in disarray with no clear picture of unfolding events. Monty's American counterpart, General Omar N. Bradley, remained at his headquarters far south in Luxembourg City, cut off from his northern units and claiming that he could manage the U.S. Army's

greatest battle by telephone. Eisenhower's decision to give command of Bradley's forces to Montgomery was a wise one unfettered by petty national jealousy. (See *Command Decisions*, page 28.)

Yet Montgomery's self-serving remarks, and in particular his egotistical demeanor, overshadowed his exceptional military leadership. He was a battlefield master who couldn't seem to avoid getting under other people's skin.

A MILITARY MONK

Montgomery's story began in London, where he was born on November 17, 1887. The fourth of nine children in a clerical family, his father was an Irish bishop and his mother was strict and demanding. He once wrote, "I can say that my own childhood was unhappy ... certainly due to a clash of wills between my mother and myself." Yet family friction helped Montgomery develop a strong will and an independent nature, prompting him later to declare, "I learnt early to stand on my own."

Young Montgomery attended St. Paul's School, one of Britain's oldest. Later, he went to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst as a "gentleman cadet," meaning that his parents, not the government, paid for his tuition, boarding, books and uniforms. His rigorous training and education combined with his strict family upbringing set him on the path to becoming what can only be described as "a military monk." He lived a life totally consumed by his martial profession.

After graduating from Sandhurst, Montgomery joined the 1st Battalion, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and began his military service in India. Early on, others noted in him a stubborn constitution and steely determination. Montgomery wrote, "I had learnt before I left school that of the many attributes necessary for success, two are vital – hard work and absolute integrity. To these I would add a third – courage. I mean moral courage – not afraid to say or do what you believe to be right." He not only believed this creed, he lived it – sometimes to the chagrin of his future military and political superiors.

When the Great War began in August of 1914, Monty was sent to France with his regiment. Less than two months later, on October 13, he was shot in the chest and severely wounded in the First Battle of Ypres. For his part in the battle, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for gallantry in action. Only 8,981 DSOs were presented to the millions of British soldiers who served during the war.

While recovering from his injuries, Montgomery received a promotion to brigade major. By early 1916, he was back fighting on the Western Front. He participated in the disastrous Battle of the Somme, the first day of which was the bloodiest in British history.

Montgomery's star was rising, and numerous senior officers had favorably noticed him. By 1918, he was a colonel serving as the general staff officer of the 47th London Division. As he began developing his own theories about leadership and motivation, he wrote, "Unlike steel, an army is a most sensitive instrument and can easily become damaged; its basic ingredient is men and, to handle an army well, it is essential to understand human nature."

After the war (and just as his future American counterparts were also experiencing in the rapidly demobilizing U.S. Army), Montgomery was reduced to his permanent grade of captain. He attended the Staff College at Camberley in 1920, and in 1921 was assigned to Ireland in the difficult role of brigade staff officer of a unit placed

it once and for all with the threat of a “him or me” cable to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

squarely in the midst of the conflict between British forces and the Irish Republican Army. During this politically charged assignment, Montgomery learned the value of maintaining strict discipline and of conducting carefully planned, tightly controlled operations.

In 1927, Montgomery married Elizabeth Hobart, a war widow whose first husband was killed in 1915. She and Monty had one son together, David, born in 1928. The marriage ended tragically, however, when Elizabeth died of blood poisoning in 1937. After her death, Montgomery’s professional life consumed even more of his energy.

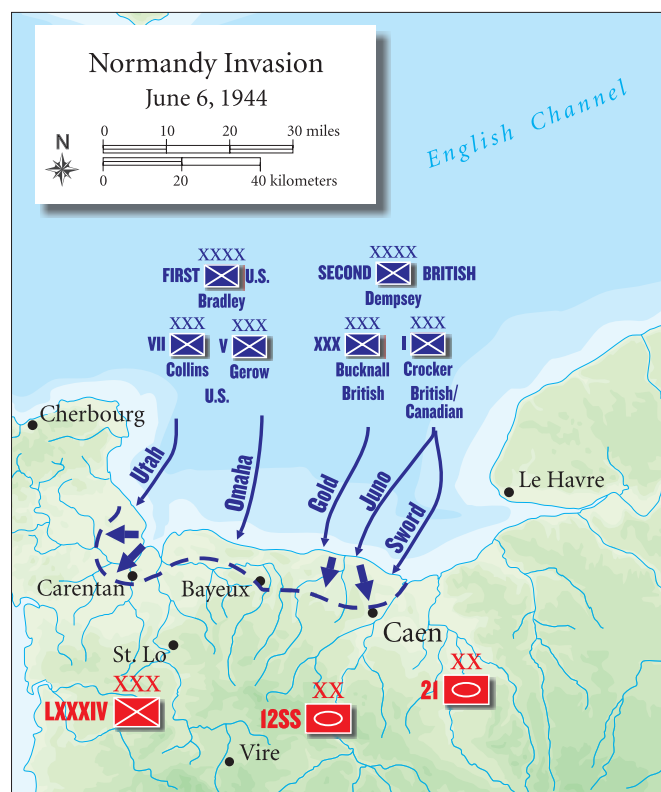
Like other officers in the British army during the interwar years, Montgomery progressed through a series of assignments, including a position as an instructor at Camberley and several tours of service with his regiment in the Middle East and India. Eventually promoted to colonel, he served as chief instructor at the Indian Army Staff College from 1934 to 1937. He received another promotion and brigade command, followed shortly thereafter by promotion to major general commanding the 8th Division in Palestine. By the eve of World War II, Montgomery’s quarter of a century of dedicated service as a “military monk” had earned him a widespread reputation for demanding excellence. He was perfectly positioned to attain high rank and important command during the coming war – provided he could deliver results on the battlefield.

DESERT VICTORY

On September 3, 1939, two days after Hitler’s blitzkrieg rolled into Poland, Britain declared war on Germany. Montgomery was appointed commander of the 3d Division and ordered to Belgium as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). When Hitler loosed his armies against France and the BEF in May 1940, Montgomery soon found himself part of the famed “miracle” evacuation from the beaches of Dunkirk along with over 330,000 British and French troops. During those confusing days, he was assigned command of the II British Corps. He impressed his superiors with his ability to keep confusion from becoming disorganized chaos. Upon his return, he received a promotion to lieutenant general and took command of V British Corps. Less than a year later, he was given an additional corps and elevated to head of Southeastern Command.

While Monty prepared his forces in England with characteristic discipline and attention to detail, events in the deserts of North Africa brought about the greatest opportunity of his career.

Montgomery owed his entrance into the desert war to two men: German General Erwin Rommel and British General W. H. E. Gott. Rommel had earned the nickname the “Desert Fox” by continually confounding British efforts to defeat his German and Italian forces. He captured the fortress of Tobruk (June 1942) and ran British and Commonwealth forces back deep into Egypt where the Eighth Army took up positions at El Alamein, the last defensible line between Rommel and Cairo. Gott, on the other hand, had the bad luck to be killed when his plane was shot down on August 7. At the time, he was preparing to take over command of the Eighth Army subsequent to General Claude Auchinleck’s relief from the position. After Gott’s death, Churchill and Brooke ordered Montgomery to rush to El Alamein to assume command. It proved a wise choice, and Brooke later wrote, “It seemed almost like the hand of God suddenly appearing to set matters right where we had gone



The Allied landings in Normandy featured Montgomery’s steady hand as overall ground force commander, a position he held until Ike assumed the duty as part of the role of supreme commander.

wrong. ... I do not think that [Gott] would have had the energy and vitality to stage and fight this battle as Monty did. ... I am convinced that the whole course of the war might well have been altered if Gott had been in command of Eighth Army.”

Monty immediately took firm control in a flurry of directives and told his men, “There will be no more bellyaching and no more retreats.” The line was vintage Montgomery, combining the elements of a disciplinarian with that of a leader who was setting standards in an army that had suffered huge setbacks. With incredible energy, thoroughness and self-discipline, he began setting the scene for the most important battle of his career – a counterstrike against Rommel.

By October 23, the Eighth Army totaled nearly 200,000 soldiers with more than 1,300 tanks and 2,000 artillery pieces. Monty was ready to go. He initiated Operation Lightfoot – a magnificent set-piece battle and the final one of El Alamein – with a stunning artillery barrage. Over the next week, he systematically dismantled the enemy’s strongpoints.

Rommel, who began the battle on sick leave in Austria, hurried back only to initiate a retreat that continued until his army was first trapped between the Eighth Army and the Allies advancing after the Operation Torch landings and then captured when Tunisia fell. As the architect of Rommel’s defeat, Monty was awarded the title “Viscount Montgomery of Alamein” after the war. Recognizing the battle as one of the war’s turning points, Churchill declared, “Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat.”

On May 4, 1945, Montgomery “scooped” his American counterparts

BATTLEFIELD LEADER

FIGHTING WITH ALLIES

Montgomery’s next military operation, the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, again found him at the head of the Eighth Army. This time, however, he fought at the side of U.S. units. Monty now had to share the spotlight with George S. Patton, an American commander also accustomed to garnering headlines. Perhaps predictably given the egos involved, the Sicilian campaign degenerated into a race for Messina, the strategically important city that was the German army’s escape route to Italy. (See Battle of Sicily map, page 88.) Although Monty intended for the Eighth Army to capture Messina, his American rival was just as determined that the Seventh U.S. Army (positioned to protect the Eighth Army’s left flank) would capture it. On August 17, American troops entered Messina first – Patton had won.

Despite the intensity with which both commanders pushed their troops toward Messina, neither was able to prevent the main body of German troops from escaping to Italy. The “race,” however, did more than just let the Germans get away. It precipitated among Monty’s American colleagues hard feelings that lasted throughout the war. Bradley expressed the sentiments of most senior American leaders when he remarked, “We perceived ... that Monty had nominated himself for the starring role in Sicily.” Monty’s abrasive personality, his attitude suggesting superiority, and the incidents in which he “commandeered” vital roads from U.S. sectors in order to advance his own troops sparked resentment, mistrust and ill will.

Monty’s Calling

Montgomery approached military service more as a calling than as a profession, dedicating the whole of his adult life to studying and mastering his chosen field. To refer to him in his single-minded pursuit of martial excellence as akin to a “military monk” is no exaggeration.

Monty lived a lifestyle more like that of a priest than of a soldier. Although a member of a profession that considered alcohol one of the basic food groups, he did not drink. Nor did he smoke or permit others to do so in his presence – he once chastised Eisenhower, who smoked up to 80 cigarettes a day, for lighting up during a briefing. Monty’s meals consisted of simple “soldier’s food,” and this, combined with his no-alcohol-no-smoking policy, kept Churchill’s visits to his field headquarters to a minimum.

Preferring to live austere in the field, Monty turned down the offer of a comfortable villa as his headquarters and instead chose a Spartan existence in a simple command trailer (“caravan” in British terminology) throughout the war. Along with battle maps, he festooned the walls of his caravan with photographs of opposing German commanders – first Rommel, and then Albert Kesselring and Walther Model. He studied his enemy with the same religious fervor with which he approached everything else in the military profession.

Perhaps most revealing of Montgomery’s mindset, however, was his choice of favorite books – the *Bible* and *Pilgrim’s Progress*.



ALL IMAGES FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Lt. Gen. Bernard Montgomery confers with the commander of the Desert Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Arthur Coningham.

by accepting the surrender of all enemy forces in northern Germany.

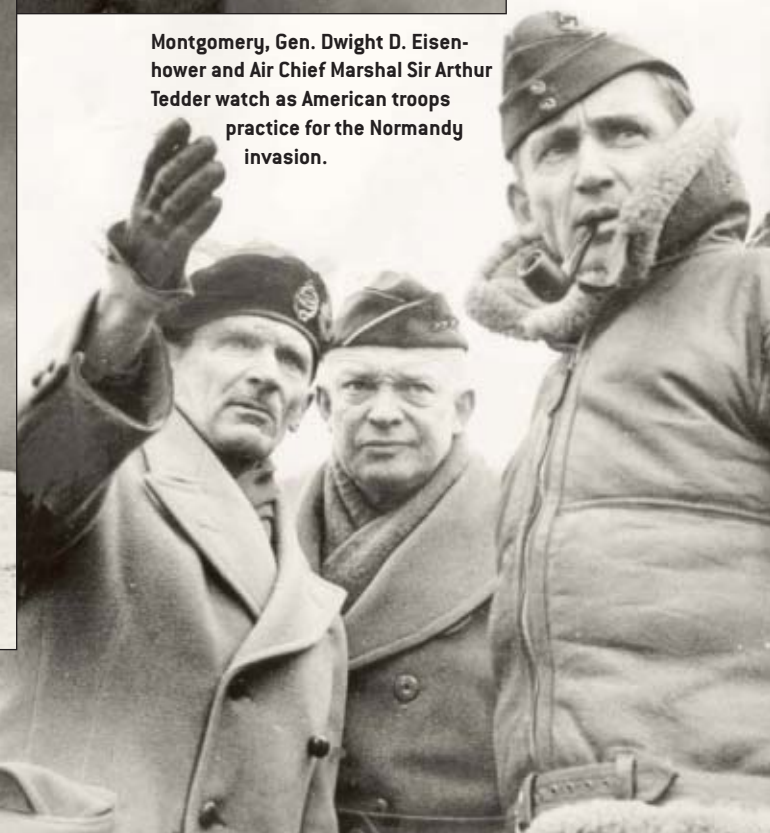


LEFT: July 28, 1943. Montgomery visits Gen. George S. Patton's headquarters in Sicily.

BELOW: June 12, 1944. Gen. Montgomery decorates Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor, commanding general of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division, with the British Distinguished Service Order.



Montgomery, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder watch as American troops practice for the Normandy invasion.



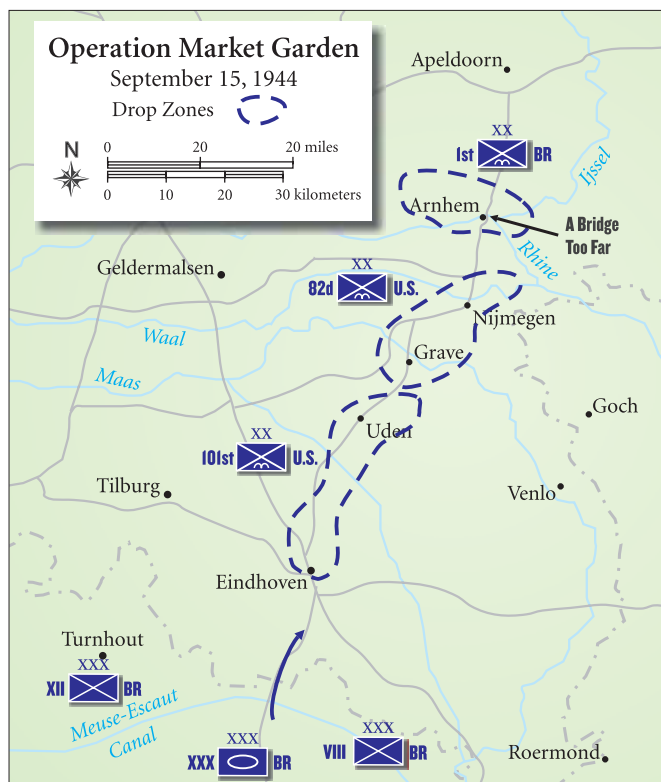
In December 1943, Montgomery was recalled to England from Italy, where the Allies had struck after Sicily, to take command of the Second British Army and to begin preparations for the invasion of Europe. While Monty believed that he should lead the upcoming invasion, it was clear that a U.S. commander would be put in charge since the preponderance of Allied troops would increasingly be American. Thus, Dwight Eisenhower received command of Operation Overlord.

During the Normandy invasion, Montgomery commanded his own 21 Army Group and exercised overall ground command under Ike. (See Normandy Invasion map, page 89.) Concentrating his post-D-Day attacks on Caen, Monty explained, drew Germany's main armored forces onto his British and Canadian units, which facilitated the American breakout from the beachhead in July. He continued to exercise overall ground command until Eisenhower combined that function with his own supreme command after the Allied armies had liberated France and were poised on the German border. Yet Monty persistently badgered Ike to release that duty to him in order to permit him to lead a single, powerful thrust into the heart of Germany, which Monty was convinced would quickly end the war. Ike thought differently, however, denigrating Monty's proposal as a "pencil-thin thrust" that ran the risk of being cut off. Monty, in turn, criticized Ike's plan, charging that it was a "broad front" that lacked proper concentration of forces and that it would only prolong the war. As a result, the Allied armies advanced against Germany along two main axes.

If Eisenhower had second thoughts about refusing Monty's request for overall ground command, they were crushed by the spectacular failure Montgomery led in September. (See Market Garden map, page 92.) Operation Market Garden was exceedingly bold, even audacious, and was put together without the meticulously detailed planning that distinguished Monty's most successful operations – and with which he was most comfortable. This attempt to "jump the Rhine" by conducting massive airborne drops to seize bridges over the Lower Rhine ended in disaster when the follow-on ground forces of the XXX British Corps were unable to reach the "bridge too far" held by the British 1st Parachute Division at Arnhem before German forces annihilated the "Red Devils."

Despite this failure, Monty continued to pester Ike on the ground command issue. Eisenhower, however, ended it once and for all with the threat of a "him or me" cable to the Combined Chiefs of Staff after Montgomery, with abysmally poor timing, broached the subject once again in a December 29 letter to Ike while the supreme commander was unsuccessfully trying to get Monty to close the trap on German forces withdrawing from the Bulge salient. Chastened – Ike threatened to replace Monty with Field Marshal Alexander – Monty sent a letter asking Ike to tear up his previous correspondence, signing the apology, "Your very devoted subordinate."

During the remainder of the war, Montgomery led operations more suited to his set-piece preference and training. After "tidying up" the Ardennes battlefield by commanding all forces in the Bulge's northern half – a solid performance despite failing to follow up by quickly trapping the bulk of retreating German troops – Montgomery moved his armies (which included the Ninth U.S. Army) to the Rhine barrier in the Rhineland campaign. His "deliberate" crossing of the Rhine in March was a military masterpiece only slightly tarnished by the fact that Bradley's 9th Armored Division farther south



Monty's daring plan to jump the Lower Rhine using massive airborne assaults failed when the XXX British Corps was unable to reach the "bridge too far" at Arnhem in time to rescue the "Red Devils" of Britain's 1st Airborne Division.



grabbed the Ludendorff Bridge across the Rhine at Remagen before Monty's crossing began. Once Monty's forces breached that final barrier, however, they raced across the north German plain and liberated Denmark before Stalin's Red Army could seize it.

On May 4, 1945, Montgomery "scooped" his American counterparts by accepting the surrender of all enemy forces in northern Germany (and those still holding out in Holland) at his field headquarters in Luneburg Heath. Ike was forced to wait until May 7 to receive the unconditional surrender of the remaining German troops.

BATTLEFIELD MASTER

Montgomery's postwar career included a stint as chief of the Imperial General Staff (1946-1948) and chairman of the permanent defense organization of the Western European Union. He also served as deputy supreme commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a position he held until he retired in 1958. Monty passed away on March 24, 1976, in Alton, Hampshire, at the age of 89. He is buried in the Holy Cross Churchyard in Binstead, Hampshire.

Montgomery's legacy is filled with contradictions of personality but clarity of purpose. Diminutive in stature yet a giant on the battlefield, he earned the respect of the American Soldier – though not always the admiration of the senior American leadership – and inspired his British troops. To his men, he wasn't complicated at all; at the end of the day, he was simply "Monty," hero of El Alamein and World War II.

Most importantly, Monty was a tactically and strategically gifted 20th-century warrior who delivered victories when it counted. As a military leader, few in history can compete with him. Yet, like Patton, his outrageous ego often made it difficult for others to like him. That arrogance, however, gave him supreme confidence in his own abilities and warfighting skills. Particularly during 1944 and 1945, Monty used his considerable battlefield mastery to conserve the one resource that Britain had in dwindling supply – combat soldiers. His more deliberate, less daring approach to battle may have frustrated the Allies on occasion, but his men loved him for it.

Perhaps Winston Churchill best summed up the conflicting sentiments toward Montgomery when he said of the field marshal, "Indomitable in retreat; invincible in advance; insufferable in victory."

Montgomery, who has certainly earned the right to have the last word on his remarkable career, wrote in his memoirs, "I recognize that I have often been a controversial figure. But my thoughts, actions, and mistakes have been but human. Throughout my life and conduct, my criterion has been not the approval of others nor of the world; it has been my inward convictions, my duty and my conscience. I have never been afraid to say what I believed to be right and to stand firm in that belief. This has often got me into trouble."

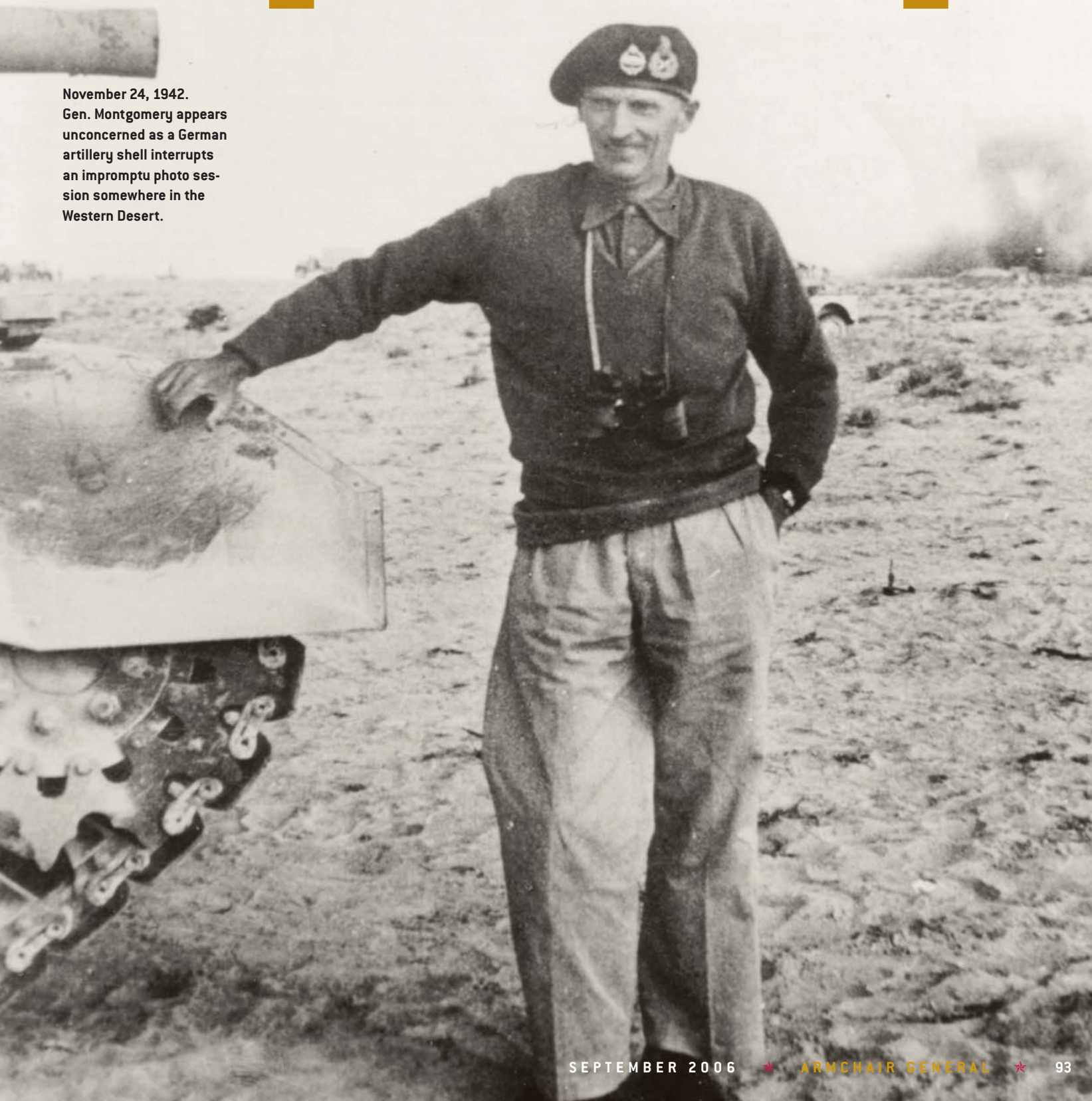
As an exercise in self-analysis, Monty's observations seem spot-on. ★

Brian Sobel, president of Sobel Communications, is a frequent contributor to magazines, an on-air political and military analyst, and author of "The Fighting Pattons."

LEFT: After his "set-piece" crossing of the Rhine at Wesel, Montgomery's 21 Army Group raced through northern Germany against weakening enemy resistance. On May 4, 1945, Monty accepted the surrender of all remaining Nazi military forces in northwest Germany.

Recognizing the battle as one of the war's turning points, Churchill declared, "Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat."

November 24, 1942.
Gen. Montgomery appears
unconcerned as a German
artillery shell interrupts
an impromptu photo ses-
sion somewhere in the
Western Desert.



WITNESS TO WAR

The One-Way, Nerve-Wracking Rides of the “WACO” Combat Gliders

World War II glider troops literally crashed their way into battle – an operation that was often more dangerous than combat.

Howard Peterson shares his firsthand account of the experience.

In June 1944, I was a strapping 6-foot-3-inch, 215-pound Soldier serving in England while assigned to the First U.S. Army Group – the “Ghost Army” whose mission was to convince Nazi intelligence that the Allied invasion would land at Pas de Calais, not Normandy. But in August of that year, we received a new assignment. The Army “volunteered” us to become glider troops. To flesh out the glider regiments in the 82d and 101st airborne divisions for Operation Market Garden, we were lined up alphabetically. Everybody from A through K went to the 101st, and everybody from L through Z went to the 82d.

I was soon introduced to the flimsy craft that would ferry me into combat. The CG-4A “Waco” combat glider was one of the first use-once-then-throw-away items – built expressly with that in mind – to transport military cargo or troops on a one-way, nerve-wracking ride that was supposed to end in a “controlled crash.” Of the nearly 14,000 CG-4A gliders built primarily by the Waco Aircraft Company of Troy, Ohio, during the war, not one serviceable example remains today.

The Waco did not inspire confidence in glider riders. Constructed of tubular steel, plywood and aluminum, it was covered with a fabric that made a drumming sound when

air passed over it during a tow. The highly inflammable waterproof coating meant the covering was easily set on fire by tracers. When shots penetrated the fabric, the noise was like popcorn popping inside a paper bag and the bullets gave off a “wheee” sound as they ricocheted off the tubing. The floor was thin plywood, and the seats located along both sides of the fuselage were merely depressions in aluminum – a place to park your butt. We sat facing one another so closely that each man’s knees touched the guy across from him. Skids running along the bottom of the front portion of the glider were the “braking system,” which was activated by the pilot tipping the glider forward.

As bad as the Waco seemed on the ground, it was worse when airborne. The glider was towed by a 300-foot-long, 1-inch-diameter nylon rope that stretched as much as 45 feet, causing a motion that made us airsick – when the guy on each side of me and the one sitting across from me all started to vomit, the sound, sight and stench emptied my stomach, too. One end of the towrope attached to the glider’s nose and the other end hooked to the tail of the “tug,” as the tow plane was called. As soon as the towrope became taught, the glider made a stomach-sickening sideward jerk that

ADDITIONAL IMAGES FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



ABOVE: Soldiers of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment prepare for the airlift across the English Channel. The combat load for these troopers was heavier than their “ground pounder” counterparts since they had to carry everything needed until linkup with supporting units.

RIGHT: September 1944. This photograph of Howard Peterson, a trooper in the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, was taken in Leicester, England, just prior to his participation in Operation Market Garden.



IMAGE PROVIDED BY HOWARD PETERSON



One second we were sitting still,
and the next second we were doing
50-plus miles per hour.

caused us all to swallow hard as we moved behind the tug. One second we were sitting still, and the next second we were doing 50-plus miles per hour.

Although the abrupt takeoff and seesaw flight to the target area tried the nerves, the most dangerous part was the landing. It is difficult to describe a combat glider landing adequately – so much happened so fast. Release height was between 1,500 to 2,000 feet, and when the glider pilot disengaged from the tug, all forward motion seemed to stop immediately as the glider dropped like the proverbial ton of bricks. The pilot's stomach was left "up there" while his body was down below, sucking for air.

The glider was designed to descend at 70 miles per hour and slow to 50 just prior to landing by using wing "spoilers." The payload was less than two tons, but gliders were typically overloaded, which often brought the landing speed up to 90 or 100 miles per hour. An overloaded glider greatly increased the dive angle, making the controlled crash landing more hazardous and increasing the occupants' odds of injury or death. Safe landings were the exception, not the rule. If we survived the crash landing, we were expected to get out of the glider as fast as possible and

then haul our butts to where some SOB we didn't know was trying to kill us!

I may have been "drafted" into the 82d Airborne for my ride into hell, but I believe my attitude about my combat experience in Operation Market Garden echoes that of my buddies in the "All American" Division: Despite everything, I wore my glider wings and jump boots with honor and pride. I wouldn't take a million bucks to do it again, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world. ★

Howard Peterson lives in San Jose, California. Despite being "drafted" into the 82d Airborne, he remains a proud "glider rider" Sky Soldier.

Two-Legged Mules

Glider and airborne troops sometimes referred to themselves as "two-legged mules" since their insertion behind enemy lines meant that they had to carry all the equipment and supplies needed to fight and survive until the linkup with supporting ground forces. Here's what Howard Peterson carried on his "ride into hell" at Market Garden:

- M-1 Garand rifle
- 2 bandoliers of ammunition
- 6 fragmentation grenades
- Smoke grenade
- K-Bar combat knife
- "Fair share" of squad's ammo
- Gas mask
- Binoculars
- Map and compass
- Walkie-talkie
- Shelter half with ropes, poles and pegs
- GI blanket
- Raincoat
- 3 K rations
- 2 extra pairs of socks
- Extra pair of underwear
- 2 canteens and water purification tablets
- First-aid dressing
- Mess kit with utensils
- Toiletries (shaving gear, toothbrush, etc.)
- Towel and soap
- Candles and Sterno heating tablets
- Cigarettes and matches

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From the War Room to the Board Room...

Not every war is fought in the field. Every day you're faced with your own battles and challenges on the job.

We'd like you to share how the strategies you read about in Armchair General are helping you in your daily activities.

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To enter, please go to www.Armchairgeneral.com/mystory and tell us your story.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ARMCHAIR

GENERAL ★

You've already earned your stripes. Now get your stars.



ABOVE: September 1944. In an all too typical landing, a Waco glider crashes during the Allied airborne invasion of Holland.

UPPER LEFT: C-47 transport planes tow CG-4A Waco gliders before cutting them loose to crash land. Loaded through the upward-hinged nose section, each glider could carry 13 troops with full combat loads, small vehicles, or a 75 mm howitzer.

LEFT: U.S. Soldiers await takeoff in their glider.

The most fun in *Rise and Fall: Civilizations at War* comes when choosing a hero then jumping into his shoes and joining the fray.

GAME BUZZ

Rush for Berlin offers an alternate history timeline, beautiful visuals, and units that feature incredible vehicles such as the German Maus.



Tank Commander is easily accessible and (literally) a blast to play.



High-tech weapons? Check. Cool bridge reflections? Check. *Prism* may be another anti-terrorist shooter hit.



In *Combat Mission: ShockForce*, a mortar team sends a round downrange while the rifleman in the foreground prepares to shoot if it doesn't land on target.

War Never Looked So Good

Eight dazzlers for your gaming pleasure.

1

Out soon from Midway (midway.com), *Rise and Fall: Civilizations at War* is a cross between *Age of Empires* and a role-playing game. In real-time strategy mode, players take charge of one of civilization's four great empires, controlling their troops from a typical top-down perspective. The most fun comes when choosing a hero – there are eight in all, including Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great – then jumping into his shoes and joining the fray.

2

Paradox (paradoxplaza.com) pulled out all the stops with its soon-to-be-released game, *Rush for Berlin*. The resource spent to purchase units in this World War II real-time strategy title isn't oil or steel – it's *time*. The better the player uses it, the more troops he can buy. Each of the four campaigns – Soviet, German, Western Allies and French Resistance – fights the last year of World War II. *Rush for Berlin* offers an alternate history timeline, beautiful visuals, and units that feature incredible vehicles such as the German Maus.

3

New from Ubisoft (ubisoft.com) is *Splinter Cell: Double Agent*, the latest chapter in the Sam Fisher saga. We all know

Sam is the coolest stealth operative in the gaming world, and the *Splinter Cell* franchise always provides an addictive mix of heart-thumping operations and intriguing story line. Yet in *Double Agent*, the plot thickens as Sam appears to play for the other team. Taking a walk on the dark side, he infiltrates a terrorist organization and actually participates in their operations. It's a riveting concept: To do good, one must do bad. The player's choice of when to blow his cover and attack the terrorists is the central decision of the game.

4

Engineered by Slitherine Software and published by Strategy First (strategyfirst.com), *Legion Arena* depicts real-time battles between the armies that fought during the Roman Republic era – sort of a *Rome: Total War* without the overarching turn-based strategic element. That, however, is not a bad thing. The game focuses on the role-playing aspect of the battles as players start with a band of peasant warriors and fight their way to fame and glory. With each victory, troops gain experience and learn plenty of new skills. *Legion Arena* ships with over 100 scenarios and more hours of battle bonhomie than a *Troy* weekend-movie marathon.

5

It *had* to happen. First there

Legion Arena ships with over 100 scenarios and more hours of battle bonhomie than a *Troy* weekend-movie marathon.

Prism was developed jointly with a similar yet more complex game that was produced as a recruiting tool for the National Guard.

In **ÜberSoldier**, the Germans discover how to bring the dead back to life. Furthermore, these newly risen corpses have fantastic powers.

was *Combat Mission: Beyond Overlord*, then *Combat Mission: Barbarossa to Berlin*, and finally *Combat Mission: Afrika Korps. Battlefront* (battlefront.com) had nowhere left to go but to today's conflicts. Scheduled for a fall 2006 release, **Combat Mission: ShockForce** arms gamers with modern Abrams Main Battle Tanks and Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles and pits them against the forces of terror. Unlike previous iterations, *ShockForce* features a story-based campaign in which players fight a terrorist regime in Syria. Although the original "turn-based planning/real-time resolution" is available, gamers may choose to conduct the entire battle in real-time.

6

Playlogic (playlogicgames.com) also takes part in the fight against terrorists. The soon-to-be-released **Prism** places players in charge of an elite team combating terrorism in the United States. This first-person shooter was developed jointly with *Prism: Guard Shield*, a similar yet more complex game produced as a recruiting tool for the National Guard.

7

CDV (cdv.de) brings to the monitor **ÜberSoldier**, a game that is half military-themed shooter, half horror flick. It goes something like this: Set in August of 1942 against the backdrop of World War II, the Germans discover how to bring the dead back to life. (Nazi zombies!) Furthermore, these newly risen corpses have fantastic powers. Gamers play the role of Karl Stolz, a Wehrmacht officer killed while leading a raid against partisans. However, Stolz has not forgotten the unholy act scientists performed on his dead

body, so now he fights against the Germans. Through 12 levels and with 16 different weapons, he battles his crafty enemies – both human and horrifically *unhuman* – until he rids the world of the Nazi menace.

The intriguing science-fiction elements in *ÜberSoldier* do not detract from its realism. The game accurately models bullet damage – a shot to the head kills instantly but one to the arm might not. Better still, the bad guys act as if they want to live, laying down suppressive fire and attempting to flank Stolz.

8

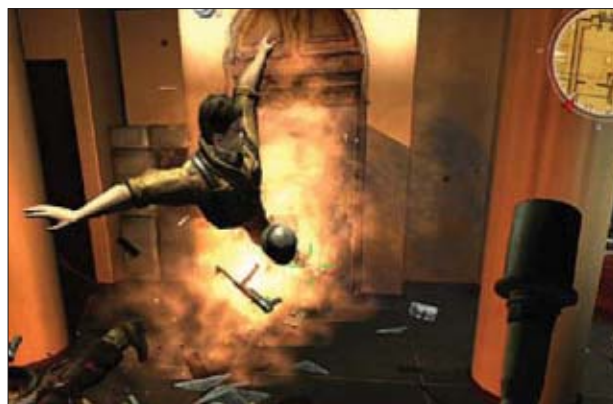
Co-published by Got Game Entertainment and Merscom, **World War II Tank Commander** (wwiitankcommander.com) is part simulation, part arcade, and all easily accessible tank action – just the thing armored combat enthusiasts have been looking for. Players command an M-4 Sherman tank from a first-person perspective as they relive the Western Front campaigns circa 1944, blasting panzers in Brittany, pushing the Germans across the Moselle, and driving hard to relieve Bastogne. Each of the game's 10 levels includes multiple objectives, which keeps things interesting. *M-1 Tank Platoon II* it's not, but neither does it take as long to master. It's just simple, clean fun with a touch of historicity.

Until next issue, join us at armchairgeneral.com and follow our Game Sections and Game Resources links. ★

Mark H. Walker is a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve. A veteran electronic entertainment/IT journalist and boardgame designer, he has authored or contributed to over 40 books and recently designed the critically acclaimed board wargame "Lock 'n Load."



Sam gets a helper in *Double Agent* – and it's a good thing because this is the toughest *Splinter Cell* yet.



ÜberSoldier boasts some of the most explosive firefights ever seen.



Civilizations at War lets gamers fight out the great battles of history in beautiful 3-D.

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GAME?**

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VIDEO GAME REVIEW

ARMCHAIR GENERAL'S FIVE-STAR RATING SCALE:
 ★★★★★ = ACG'S HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION
 ★★★★ = EXCELLENT
 ★★★ = GOOD
 ★★ = BELOW AVERAGE
 ★ = NOT RECOMMENDED

Strategy, Technology and Gunplay ... Oh My!

A trinity of new and absorbing war and strategy games.



Black specializes in murky, moody environments.



The combat in *Black* is as exciting as it is tense.

Black

It's not the strategy that makes *Black* a great game, although you'll need remarkable tactical acumen to wade through the hordes of enemies. It's not the graphics, yet these are some of the best visuals available. It's not even the realistic weaponry, though you'll wield everything from an AK-47 to an RPG-16. Rather, *Black* is an amazing game because of the sum of its parts.

This modern-day first-person shooter (with some squad elements) feels like a Hollywood blockbuster movie. The development team credits television shows such as *24* and *Alias* as the inspiration behind the game, and the influence is obvious.

Black tells the story of Sergeant Jack Kellar, an Army

Special Forces operative assigned to conduct spec ops in Europe. The rest of the details are fleshed out through multiple levels of intense, thrilling gunplay. The focus is on the game's weapons, and everything is destructible. For instance, pelt a retreating enemy with a hail of bullets and watch



as each round splinters the wall above his head. Not only that – a spent casing ejects from your gun and clatters to the street. Soon, there's so much dust and debris in the air that

you can no longer see your opponents. And the noise from your weapon is the most realistic you'll hear this side of a firing range. It's like being in the middle of filming for *Saving Private Ryan* or *Black Hawk Down*.

If you buy only one shooter this year, let it be *Black*. You won't be disappointed.

★

ARMCHAIR GENERAL

ACG RATES THIS GAME

★★★★★

● Released February 2006	● Published by Electronic Arts
● Rated Mature	● MSRP \$49.99
● Developed by Criterion	● Formatted for Xbox & PS2

BLACK

Mark H. Walker is a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve. A veteran electronic entertainment/IT journalist and boardgame designer, he has authored or contributed to over 40 books and recently designed the critically acclaimed board wargame "Lock 'n Load."

Spanking new from Red Storm,
Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter is
the best *Ghost Recon* yet.

Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter

Spanking new from Red Storm, *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter* is the best *Ghost Recon* yet. Captain Scott Mitchell and his fire team of Ghosts fight for their lives on the mean streets of Mexico City as they attempt to free the kidnapped American president.

Advanced Warfighter highlights some nifty new capabilities of sleek weaponry currently in real-world development. The equipment includes sophis-

ticated body armor and a futuristic helmet with laser target designator, integrated radio, and a gizmo called a "cross-com unit." The cross-com looks like a blue eyepiece on the troopers' goggles and can magnify targets with practically any weapon. Once you spot a target – for instance, a head peeping around the next corner – the gear, which is linked to all the other battlefield sensors, fills in the rest by providing a



UBISOFT

★ ARMCHAIR GENERAL

ACG RATES THIS GAME ★★★★★

- Released March 2006
- Rated Mature
- Developed by Red Storm
- Published by Ubisoft
- MSRP \$49.99
- Formatted for Xbox, PS2 & Xbox 360

GHOST RECON: ADVANCED WARFIGHTER

ghostly highlight of the enemy's assumed position.

Technology aside, you and your teams will still need to fight. Squad control is solid and the artificial intelligence is sharp – the squads engage enemies, advance to selected locations, and generally make themselves useful. And the multiplayer mode employs the same high-tech features as the

single-player game, including the "picture-in-picture" that lets you see what your squad mates can see.

Advanced Warfighter's mixture of cutting-edge technology, immersive multiplayer, and engaging squad tactics makes it mandatory gaming for military buffs and strategy fans alike. It's a superb *Ghost Recon* addition.

Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers

Computer and video games have been flirting with the tactical squad-based shooter genre for years. Some, such as Ubisoft's *Brothers in Arms*, replicate the demands of controlling a squad in harm's way and the tension inherent in a quality first-person shooter rather well. Others do not. Then there is *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers* – this game literally "nails" the tactical genre! It improves on the original *Full Spectrum Warrior* while retaining the brain-twisting, visceral challenge of leading a squad of soldiers against a Mid-East insurgency in fictional Zekistan.

Although the original game featured a

sequence with a Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, players never actually controlled it. *Ten Hammers* changes that. In a squad-level game, the Bradley's 25 mm chain gun packs one hell of a punch and the vehicle's hull provides oft-needed mobile cover for infantry.

Also new is the ability to split fire teams into two-man subteams that allow you to employ the same fire and maneuver tactics of a full squad but on a smaller scale. However, there is a tradeoff – the individuals in the smaller components are sometimes more easily frightened and less effective.

Fixing your enemy with firepower and then outflanking him has always been

a major tenant of *Full Spectrum Warrior*. But now you can "flank" him from above. *Ten Hammers* allows you to take your teams into buildings and engage the enemy from second-story windows or the roof. It's a cool option that adds another dimension (pun intended) to the simulation.

However, that's not the game's only twist. You can also

take out the bad guys with precision fire, lead a squad of NATO troopers, blast your way through multiplayer levels that highlight the "how they fight" differences between insurgents and the U.S. Army, and immerse yourself in a *Pulp Fiction*-like story that jumps back and forth in time. All this in a drop-dead gorgeous strategy game. What more could you want? ★



THQ

★ ARMCHAIR GENERAL

ACG RATES THIS GAME ★★★★★

- Released March 2006
- Rated Mature
- Developed by Pandemic
- Published by THQ
- MSRP \$49.99
- Formatted for PC, Xbox & PS2

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS

WARGAME REVIEW

ARMCHAIR GENERAL'S FIVE-STAR RATING SCALE:
★★★★★ = ACG'S HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION
★★★★ = EXCELLENT
★★★ = GOOD
★★ = BELOW AVERAGE
★ = NOT RECOMMENDED

Crown of Glory



GAME STATS:
MSRP \$44.99
PUBLISHER WEBSITE
matrixgames.com
DEVELOPER WEBSITE
west-civ.com
PLATFORM/PC SPECS Processor:
500 MHz; OS: XP/2000; Memo-
ry: 256 MB; Video Card: 32 MB;
Hard Drive Space: 650 MB

MATRIX GAMES

C*rown of Glory*, a strategic-level game covering the Napoleonic era, divides Europe into more than 200 provinces from Great Britain to Russia. While playing as one of the eight major powers, you will find that organizing divisions into corps and armies is a critical facet of the game since after orders are given all nations' units simultaneously execute area movement. When clashes occur, you may choose between a quick or detailed combat resolution. Quick combat utilizes a matrix that emphasizes the simple "rock-paper-scissors" nature of infantry-artillery-cavalry dynam-

ics of that era. Detailed combat – maneuver – is fought on hex-grid terrain typical of the particular province. The game models all the relevant factors: morale, leadership, ammunition, smoke, etc. At the strategic level, you must carefully manage your country's econo-

my and trade in order to build the sinews of war. Diplomacy ranges from espionage to making – and breaking – treaties. Designed for the grognard, *Crown of Glory* challenges you to integrate many factors before allowing you to achieve a glorious victory.

★ ARMCHAIR GENERAL		ACG RATES THIS GAME
DIFFICULTY (EASY, MEDIUM, HARD) Hard	★★★★★	
TIME TO LEARN Over two hours	MULTIPLAYER Yes, up to eight players through play by e-mail or TCP/IP	
FAVORITE FAN SITE wargamer.com	FAVORITE UNIT/WEAPON The French heavy cavalry division	
MOST EXCITING ASPECT Attempting to re-create Napoleon's feats	BEST REASON TO BUY To learn firsthand the strategic decisions faced by Napoleon and his contemporaries	
BEST SCENARIO Standard Campaign		
CROWN OF GLORY		

Take Command: Second Manassas



GAME STATS:
MSRP \$39.99
PUBLISHER WEBSITE
paradoxplaza.com
DEVELOPER WEBSITE
madminutegames.com
PLATFORM/PC SPECS Processor: 1
GHz; OS: Win 98/XP/2000;
Memory: 256 MB; Video Card:
64 MB DirectX 9; Hard Drive
Space: 1.3 GB

IMAGES FROM PARADOX

T*ake Command: Second Manassas* is a tactical-level, real-time Civil War game covering the two days of the 1862 Battle of Second Manassas (Second Bull Run to you Yankees!). You will fight across picturesque, rolling Virginia hills as a Union or Confederate brigade, division or army commander. Maneuver units are regiments or batteries, but you quickly learn to control the action by commanding through higher headquarters. Historically accurate weapons ballistics, uniforms, formations and units combined with realistic command and morale rules make *Second Manassas* an innovative and important wargame. The game system gives a superb feel for the dynamics of a Civil War battlefield, and the experience is both challenging and



fun. *Second Manassas* includes small but key improvements over the earlier *Take Command: Bull Run*. Though the game fo-

cuses on only one battle, many of the scenarios deal with segments of the larger engagement. In addition, a game editor and scenario generator ensure plenty of interesting content. *Take Command: Second Manassas* merges intense gameplay with historical accuracy to set a new standard for tactical Civil War games. ★

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Jeffrey Paulding is a lifelong student of military history and science. He has been playing wargames since the age of nine.

★ ARMCHAIR GENERAL		ACG RATES THIS GAME
DIFFICULTY (EASY, MEDIUM, HARD) Medium	★★★★★	
TIME TO LEARN Approximately one hour	BEST SCENARIO No Rest for the Weary	
FAVORITE FAN SITE wargamer.com	MULTIPLAYER Yes	
MOST EXCITING ASPECT Tense, historically accurate combat	FAVORITE UNIT/WEAPON Zouave infantry	
	BEST REASON TO BUY Unsurpassed tactical Civil War game	
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***The World at War* (1974)★★★★★**
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Released 2004

(as 30th Anniversary Edition)
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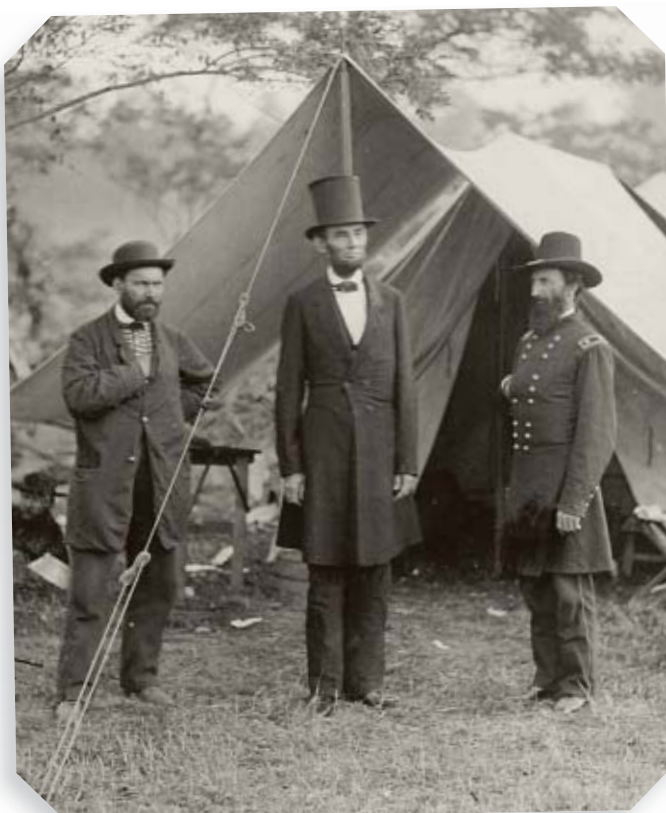


on the onscreen interviews by dozens of high-ranking participants. Virtually all of the war's major players still alive in the early 1970s provide "inside story" perspectives. Despite the wealth of new scholarship available today, the history in this groundbreaking series stands up remarkably well. A superb narration by the world's greatest actor, the late Laurence Olivier, ties it all together.

***The Civil War—A Film by Ken Burns* (1990)★★★★★**
Director Ken Burns
PBS Paramount
Released 2004

Reaching millions of viewers, this 11-hour PBS television series single-handedly brought about a renewed surge of interest in America's divisive conflict.

Burns' creative use of still photographs and his revolutionary technique of having actors read the wartime letters and state-



This 1862 photo of Union spymaster Allan Pinkerton, President Lincoln, and Union Gen. John A. McClernand is among thousands in Ken Burns' *Civil War*.

ments of actual participants (those famous as well as those little known) provide unprecedented drama and bring the war to life. Sam Waterston's "Lincoln" stands out.

***Victory at Sea* (1952)★★★★**
Director M. Clay Adams
A&E Home Video
Released 2003

This 26-episode series that focuses primarily on the U.S. Navy's role in World War II began broadcasting on NBC television just seven years after the end of the war—hence, the

wartime propaganda-like tone of the scripts. Leonard Graves' wonderfully over-dramatic narration and famed Broadway composer Richard Rogers' original compositions are highlights. Enjoy it for the marvelous music score if for no other reason.



***The First World War* (2003)★★★★**
Directors Marcus Kiggell and Simon Rockell
Image Entertainment
Released 2005

Based on the solid scholarship of Professor Hew Strachan—one of World War I's premier historians—this 10-part series builds on the excellent documentary techniques of its predecessors. It is much more historically sound than the popular 1964 CBS series *World War One* (narrated by actor Robert Ryan), and it stands head and shoulders above the sappy PBS effort *The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* (1996 series). If you buy only one World War I documentary series, let this be it.

***Liberty! The American Revolution* (1997)★★★★**

Directors Ellen Hovde and Muffie Meyer
PBS Home Video
Released 2004

Employing the same dramatic visual techniques pioneered by Ken Burns, this six-hour overview may be too short on battle commentary for ardent military history aficionados.

Yet its comprehensive coverage of how Americans won their freedom more than compensates—as opposed to *Rebels and Redcoats* (2002), which features British historian Richard Holmes whining about how "England lost" the colonies. ★

ACG's "wish list": We wish for a DVD format of the outstanding 10-hour documentary series *Russia's War: Blood on the Snow*.

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but that of a live human being.

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if you're caught beneath the rubble.

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The Rommel Myth Shattered

A revealing new book on Germany's "Desert Fox" takes aim at the mythology surrounding Hitler's best general.



Rommel oversees the surrender of the Anglo-French garrison of Calais during the 1940 campaign. Ralf Georg Reuth's book exposes a much darker character than that of the "Rommel myth" in previous biographies.

Rommel: The End of a Legend

by Ralf Georg Reuth, London:
Haus Books, 2005
(hauspublishing.co.uk).

Readers hoping to find confirmation of their idealized image of German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel won't find it in Reuth's new warts-and-all biography of everybody's favorite Nazi field commander. This outstanding examination exposes Rommel's true character as being much different – and much darker – than the fawning accounts written mostly by "star-struck" British authors who based their views on the less than two-year period (1941-1943) during which Rommel fought against British and Commonwealth forces in

the North African desert. Reuth largely attributes the "Rommel myth" to these British enemies who were desperate to inflate their opponent's skill to justify their early desert defeats and, later, to gild Montgomery's Alamein victory.

Although Rommel was clearly a brilliant operational commander, Reuth portrays him as a shameless social climber and selfish schemer who was jealous of his accomplishments and covetous of medals and higher rank. He frequently used "backdoor channels" outside his chain of command to appeal directly to Adolf Hitler – the man responsible for his meteoric rise –

for promotion and privilege. Reuth claims that, contrary to the myth, Rommel ardently supported Hitler despite having inside knowledge as early as the 1939 Polish campaign that the Nazis were murdering Europe's Jews. He apparently relished his close contacts with Hitler and was proud to be known as "the führer's general." Reuth quotes a typically obsequious Rommel

remark: "I owe my latest promotion only to the führer. You can just imagine my joy over this. His recognition of my achievements is the highest I could wish for myself."

The break between dictator and field marshal arose only when Germany's battlefield



fortunes turned sour. But by then, Rommel was too valuable a propaganda figure to be sacked outright. Hitler needed the "Rommel image" around which to rally the final defensive battle for Germany. According to Reuth, Rommel scrambled to remain in Hitler's good graces after his defeat in North Africa and was not directly involved in the plot to remove the dictator. In fact, Reuth maintains that *had* Rommel known what was afoot, he most likely would have warned Hitler. He dismisses claims that, at the final hour, the conspirators managed to convince Rommel to join their plot.

Reuth attributes the "Rommel myth" to the field marshal's British enemies (Britons wrote the first *five* Rommel biographies), Goebbels' extraordinary wartime propaganda effort, and the need for postwar Germany to resurrect Rommel as an anti-Hitler martyr to serve as a hero for the new Bundeswehr.

The Desert Fox's legions of fans will be extremely uncomfortable meeting the *real* Rommel in the pages of Reuth's must-read book. ★

Highly recommended:



Patton and Rommel: Men of War in the Twentieth Century by Dennis Showalter, New York: Berkley Caliber, 2005 (penguingroup.com).

This acclaimed historian's dual biography of World War II's most famous "fighting" generals is well worth the read.

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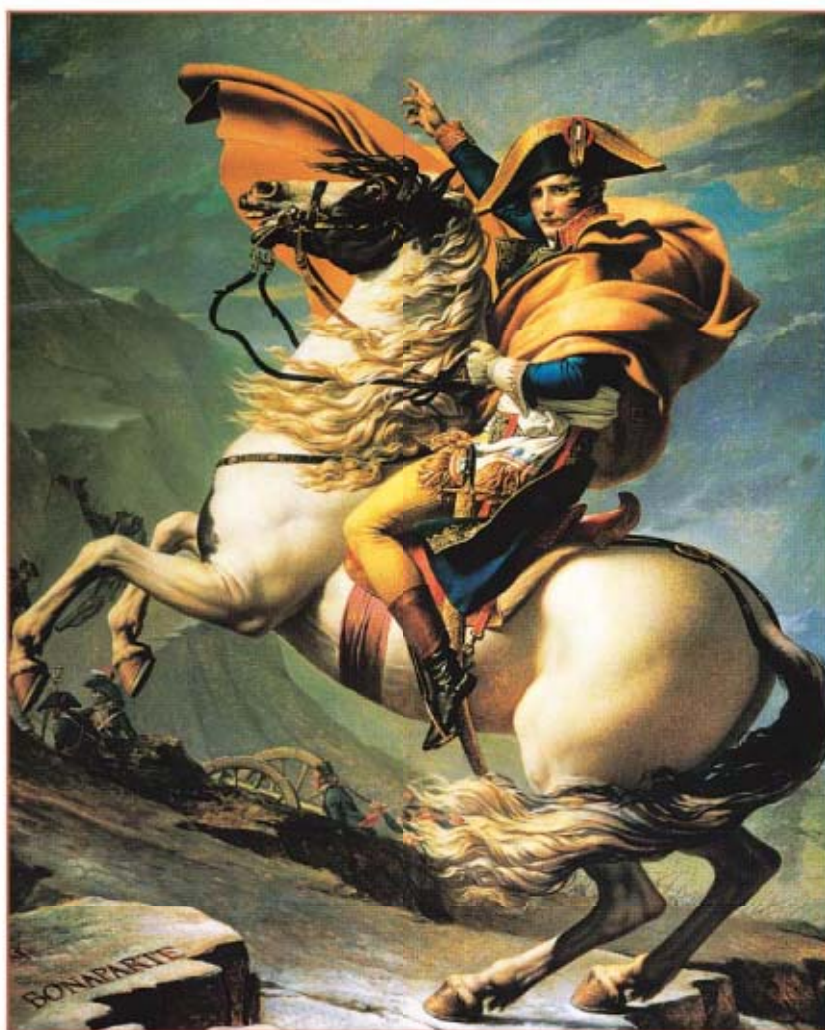
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Ben Weider, the creator and President of The International Napoleonic Society, receives the Legion of Honor Medal from His Excellency Denis Bauchard, the Ambassador of France in Canada. His Imperial Highness Prince Charles Napoleon attended this special event (left).

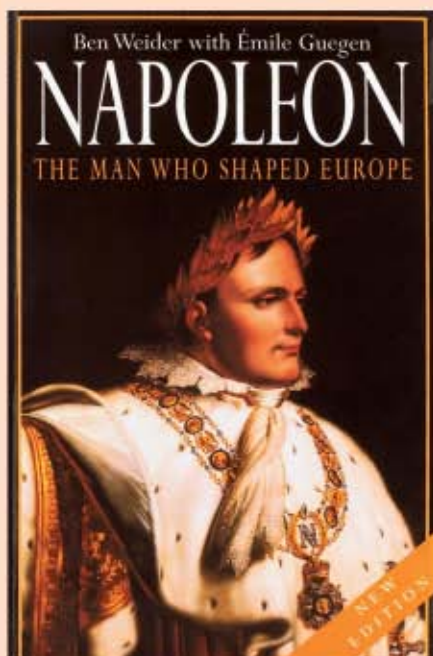


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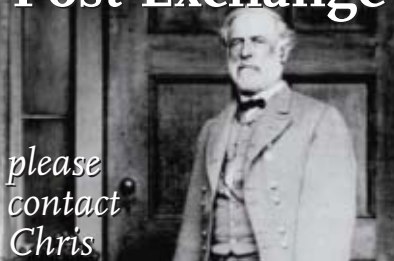
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The History Beyond the Headlines

These July 11, 1945, *Stars and Stripes* headlines provide interesting insight into the last few weeks of the Pacific War. GIs reading the newspaper would have been unaware that less than a week later, on July 16, Allied scientists would detonate the first atomic bomb. This new technology, tested in the desert of Alamogordo, New Mexico, provided a means of forcing Japan's surrender and rendered unnecessary a bloody invasion in which many of the GIs surely would have died.

Later that month, the Allied "Big Three" – Churchill, Stalin and Truman – met in Potsdam, Germany, and issued a declaration calling for Japan's immediate and unconditional surrender. By ignoring the declaration, Japanese

leaders forced the Allies to detonate the terrible new weapon.

The paper's photo, which depicts a U.S. aircraft carrier damaged by one of its own torpedo bombers, illustrates a chilling fact: American forces in the Pacific were losing thousands of servicemen to accidents and enemy action while conducting "routine" operations necessary to maintain the blockade and bombing campaign against Japan. Those who argue that continuing the campaigns eventually would have forced the Japanese to surrender – without using the atomic bombs – fail to consider the tens of thousands of Allied (and Japanese) troops who would have died as a result. ★



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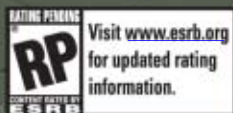
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